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THE

WORKS

OF THE

REV. RICHARD CECIL,

LATE MINISTER OF ST. JOHN'S CHAPEL, BEDFORD-ROW, LONDON.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

MISCELLANIES.

NEW-YORK:
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1847.

THE

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PREPARED FOR THE PRESS BY MR. CECIL.

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MISCELLANIES.

A FRIENDLY VISIT

TO THE

HOUSE OF MOURNING.

IN THE DAY OF ADVERSITY CONSIDER.... *Eccl.* vii. 14.

> Many are the sayings of the Wise,
> In ancient and in modern books enroll'd,
> Extolling Patience———
> But to th' afflicted in his pangs their sound
> Little prevails: or rather seems a tune
> Harsh, and of dissonant mood from his complaint,
> Unless he feels within
> Some source of consolation from above;
> Secret refreshings that repair his strength,
> And fainting spirits uphold.——*Milton.*

YOUR present affliction, my dear friend, demands something more than the usual forms of condolence. Sorrow, which, like yours, cannot be prevented, may yet be *alleviated* and *improved*. This is my design in addressing you; and, if I seem to intrude upon your retirement, let my motive be my apology. Having felt how much "better it is to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting," (Eccl. vii. 2); having received my best *Lessons*, *Companions*, and even *Comforts*, in it; I would administer from my little stock of experience: and, while I thus endeavour to assist your meditations, shall rejoice if I may contribute, though but a mite, to your comfort.

Were I, indeed, acquainted with the peculiar circumstances of your loss, I should employ particular considerations. But my present address can have only a *general* aim: which is to acquaint the heart, at a favourable moment, with its grand concerns; to give it a serious impression, when *softened*, and a heavenly direction, when *moved*. Let us, therefore, sit down humbly together in this House of Mourning. If "the heart of the wise be found" here, (Eccl. vii. 4) your experience, I hope, will prove that here also it is *formed:* —and let us calmly contemplate some momentous Objects intimately connected with it, and viewed with peculiar advantage from it.

OUR GOD is the first of these objects: with Him we seldom form any close acquaintance till we meet him in trouble. He commands silence now, that He may be heard; and removes intervening objects, that He may be seen. A SOVEREIGN DISPOSER appears, who, as "Lord of all," hath only resumed what he lent; whose will is the law of his creatures, and who expressly declares his will in the present affliction. We should seriously consider that all allowed repugnance to the determinations of his government, however made known to us, is SIN; and that every wish to alter the appointments of his wisdom, is FOLLY:—"we know not what we ask." When GOD discovers himself in any matter, they, who know him, "will keep silence before him:" Hab. ii. 20. "Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him?" How just was the reply! "Behold I am vile! what shall I answer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth:" Job xl. 2, 4.

This silent submission under trying dispensations, is variously exemplified, as well as inculcated in the Scriptures. An awful instance of sin and sorrow occ- in the family of Aaron: his sons disregarded a

divine appointment, and "there went out fire from the Lord and devoured them; but Aaron held his peace:" Lev. x. 2, 3.—Eli, in similar circumstances, silenced his heart with this single but sufficient consideration, "It is the Lord:" 1 Sam. iii. 18.—David, under a stroke which he declares consumed him, observes, "I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, because THOU didst it:" Ps. xxxix. 9.—And Job, when stript of every comfort, blessed the name of him who *took away*, as well as *gave*: Job, i. 21.—Whatever be the nature of your calamity, may it be attended with such an humble and child-like spirit as these holy men possessed!

But the Sovereign Disposer is also the COMPASSIONATE FATHER. Among other instances of his tenderness, you may have observed the peculiar supports which he affords under peculiar trials. Let us mark and acknowledge the hand, which mingles mercy with judgment, and alleviation with distress. The parents I have just mentioned lost their children under circumstances far more distressing than yours. The desire of your eyes (if not the idol of your heart) was, perhaps, almost a stranger: you strove hard to detain it, but He, who took the young children into his arms and blessed them, took yours; and, taking it, seemed to say, "'What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter:' (John xiii. 7.) Patiently 'suffer this little one to come unto me, for of such is my kingdom' composed: (Matt. xix. 14.) 'Verily I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my father!' (Matt. xviii. 10.) If I take away your child, I take it to myself. Is not this infinitely beyond any thing you could do for it? Could you say to it, if it had lived, Thou shalt 'weep no more: the days of thy mourning are ended?' (Isa. xxx. 19.) Could you show it any thing in this world like the glory of '

and of the lamb?' (Rev. xxii. 3.) Could you raise it to any honour here like 'receiving a crown of life?'" James i. 12.

The voice of a 'Father of mercies and a God of all comfort,' (2 Cor. i. 3,) speaks as distinctly in the death as in the birth of an infant. A 'voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping: Rachel, weeping for her children, refused to be comforted, because they were not. Thus saith the Lord, Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears, for there is hope in thine end, saith the Lord, that thy children shall come again to their own border:' Jer. xxxi. 15, 16. 'It is not the will of your heavenly Father that one of these little ones should perish:' Matt. xviii. 14.

'It is a pious friend that has just yielded up his breath? The same voice seems to say, "Turn from him:" or, rather, "Turn from his 'clay,' his faded garment.'—'He himself 'is taken from the evil to come: he is entered into peace:'" Isa. lvii. 1, 2.

When the able Minister, the exemplary Parent, or the faithful Partner depart, a consternation often seizes the circles which they blessed. We are so stunned by the sudden blow, or so occupied with the distressing circumstances, that we scarcely can hear God saying, "'Fear not, I, even I, am he that comforteth you:' Isa. li. 12. I, your Father, am yet alive. I gave you your departed friend. I sent every benefit which was conveyed through him. Trust me for blessings yet in store. Trust me with him, and with yourselves."

Whatever notions one who lives 'without God in the world' may form of dying, *We* should learn from his word to regard the departure of the just merely as a *Translation*;—a change, in which nothing is lost which is really valuable. As surely as we 'believe

that Jesus died and rose again,' so surely do we believe that 'them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him:' 1 Thess. iv. 14. Taught of God, we should view Losses, Sickness, Pain and Death, but as the several trying stages by which a good man, like Joseph, is conducted from a *Tent* to a *Court*:—*Sin*, his disorder; *Christ*, his physician; *Pain*, his medicine; the *Bible*, his support; the *Grave*, his bed; and *Death* itself, an Angel, expressly sent to release the worn-out Labourer, or crown the faithful Soldier. 'I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works follow them:' Rev. xiv. 13.

But, admitting the state of your departed friend to be doubtful, yet, in all cases that are really so, let us cultivate honourable thoughts of God: let us remember the FAITHFUL CREATOR. Righteousness is his throne, though clouds surround it. Whatever he has left *obscure*, we may safely leave him to explain. Let us recollect that, amidst innumerable obscurities, he hath made things *clear* in proportion as they are *important*: and therefore repeatedly urges it upon our consciences, that the door is still open to us;—that it is awful to stand before it *unresolved*;—that we must trust him to-day; and that to-morrow he will equally remove our conjectures and our complaints.

Perhaps you are ready to reply, "'I have heard many such things:' and 'I also could speak as you do, if your soul were in my soul's stead,' Job xvi. 2, 4: but my heart and my expectations are so crushed by this blow, that I can hear nothing but 'Thy bruise is incurable, and thy wound grievous: thou hast no healing medicines:'" Jer. xxx. 12, 13.

Beware, however, of falling into their sin who 'limited the Holy One of Israel:' Ps. lxxviii. 41. There is a charge continually brought against man, that, in his troubles, the Source and the Resource are equally forgotten. 'Though affliction cometh not forth of the dust;' yet 'none saith where is God my Maker, who giveth Songs in the night?' Job v. 6; xxx. 10. Endeavour, then, in extremities, to recollect an ALL-SUFFICIENT FRIEND——a very present HELP in trouble. He, at least, may add, (as he does in the passage just alluded to) 'I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds: saith the Lord.' Cannot the voice which rebuked a tempestuous sea calm our troubled spirits? Is his hand shortened at all, that he cannot 'bless our latter end,' like Job's, 'more than the beginning?' Job xlii. 12. Is it not the Lord, 'that maketh poor and maketh rich; that bringeth low and lifteth up?' 1 Sam. ii. 7. Many, whose hearts have been desolate like yours, while they have looked *around*, have at length 'looked UPWARD unto Him and been lightened:' Ps. xxxiv. 5. A single promise has afforded them not only relief, but strong consolation.

Let us, therefore, my dear friend, 'turn again to this strong-hold as prisoners of hope. Even to-day can he render double to us:' Zech. ix. 12. Let us look to *Abraham's* God, and his encouragement is ours: 'Fear not: I am GOD ALMIGHTY:' Gen. xvii. 1. *q. d.* "I am all-sufficient in all cases. I am enough; 'and able to do exceeding abundantly above all that you ask or think:' Eph. iii. 20. I have taken away thy *Gourd*, but dost thou well to be angry? Have I left nothing for thankfulness? This world, however, connot be your *home*, nor its objects your *consolation:* they are all too poor for the soul of man. 'Look unto me and be saved:' Isa. xlv. 22. 'Acquaint thyself

with Me and be at peace:' Job xxii. 21. 'Follow Me and you shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life:' John viii. 12. However dark and distressing the present state of things may appear, 'commit thy fatherless children to my care, I will preserve them alive; and let the widows trust in Me:'" Jer. xlix. 11.

Still, the beloved object is gone, and your heart follows it. You can scarcely receive counsel from infinite Wisdom, or comfort from Omnipotence. To every fresh encouragement you are ready to reply, 'Wilt thou show wonders to the dead? Shall the dead arise and praise thee? Shall thy loving kindness be declared in the grave, or thy faithfulness in destruction?' Ps. lxxxviii. 10, 11. His word repeatedly assures you they shall; and that 'all that are in the graves shall hear his voice:' John v. 28. But it informs you also, that he can do abundantly more for the living than merely restore their dead friends, or revive their fainting spirits: it teaches you that He can sanctify the separation; that he can give a divine life to the survivor, 'though dead in trespasses and sins,' Eph. ii. 1, and inseparably unite both in his kingdom.—If the Comforter could make up for the loss of *Christ's* bodily presence; yea, make it even 'expedient that HE should go away,' John xvi. 7; how much more can he supply the place of every creature!

May this COMFORTER, writing his word in your mind, help you to say with a confidence highly honourable to himself and his Gospel, "My perishing gourd is, indeed, withered a day before I expected it: my broken reed is gone; but God is left,—'a father to the fatherless,—a husband to the widow:' Ps. lxviii. 5. 'And now, Lord, what wait I for? truly my hope is in thee:' Ps. xxxix. 7. Thou canst give me 'in thy

house, a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters,' even 'an everlasting name, which shall not be cut off:' Isa. lvi. 5. And, thererore, 'though the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vine, yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the GOD OF MY SALVATION:'" Hab. iii. 17, 18.

Once more: let us endeavour, at such seasons as these, to recognize a GRACIOUS MONITOR. Whenever the Lord *strikes* he *speaks*. Let us listen, at such a time as this, with humble attention; yet with holy confidence; for it is the voice of a *Friend*,—a wonderful *Counsellor*. Let us, with the prophet, resolve to ascend the tower of observation, and observe 'what he will say unto us, and what we shall answer when we are reproved.' If, with him, we thus watch our dispensation, 'at the end,' like his, 'it shall speak:' Hab. ii. 1—3.

God is continually raising up witnesses, and sending them in his name to 'sound the alarm' in 'Zion:' Joel ii. 1. He charges them to admonish the wise, as well as the foolish Virgin, to beware of slumbering, since the bridegroom is at hand: and when one is called away, to cry to those that remain, 'Be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh:' Matth. xxiv. 44. Some, indeed, like the sons of Lot, desperately scorn the admonition, and treat it as the fear of dotage: Gen. xix. 14. Some, like those in the Acts, 'are in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this? and others mocking reply, These men are full of new wine:' Acts ii. 12, 13. But TRUTH, like a rock furiously assaulted, but unshaken, remains to scorn its scorners: and, while the witnesses continue to bear a faithful and consistent testimony, God, sooner, or later, appears in vindication of their integrity and of his own word. Entering a careless family, he smites the first-born; and as one that *will* be heard, calls aloud,

'Awake thou that sleepest; arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light:' Eph. v. 14.

And is it not, my afflicted friend, an infinite mercy, if, by *any* means, God will enter with such a *light*? that he will rouse such a *sleeper*? that, by his minister *Death*, he will arrest the attention of him who has slighted every other minister? What patience! what long suffering! to take such an one apart; bring him, from noise and occupation, into the secret and silent chamber; speak to his heart; and seal the most important truths on it, by the most affecting impressions? Is it not saying, 'How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I make thee as Admah:' Hosea xi. 8. Certain it is, that questions, which before only reached the ear, often now, like barbed arrows, remain fixed in the conscience. Conscience, no longer stifled or amused, discovers the CONTENDER; and, trembling before him, cries, 'Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke: turn thou me and I shall be turned, for thou art the Lord my God:' Jer. xxxi. 18.

This, I say, is often the case, and should it be realized in yours, as it has been in that of your present Visitor; if, instead of flying for relief to every object but God, you are brought humbly to his feet with patient submission, serious inquiry, fervent prayer, holy resolution, and firm reliance: if, in a word, by the severest stroke, the *enchantment* is also broken, your soul 'escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowler,' Ps. cxxiv. 7, and returned to its proper rest; what reason will you have to say,

> Those we call *wretched* are a chosen band.
> Amid my list of blessings infinite,
> Stand this the foremost,—'*That my heart has bled.*'
> For *All* I bless Thee;—Most, for the *severe*;
> *Her* death, *my own* at hand————

But death at hand, as an old writer expresses it, should be death in view, and lead us to consider, next,

Our PROSPECTS from this House of Sorrow, as the inhabitants of a present and future world.

Many suppose that they can best contemplate the *present* world, by frequenting the 'House of Mirth;' Eccl. vii. 4. Their whole deportment, however, shows that it makes them much too giddy for serious observation: 'having eyes they see not:' Mark viii. 18.

Look at the deceased, and contemplate present things. His days a *hand-breadth:* his beauty, consumed like the *moth-fretten garment:* his cares and pleasures, a *dream:* his attainments, as the *grass:* which flourisheth in the morning, and in the evening is cut down and withereth: his years, a *tale:* his strength *labour and sorrow.* So soon is the whole *cut off and fled,* that we cannot help repeating with the Psalmist, 'Verily, every' man, at his 'best estate, is altogether VANITY:' Ps. xxxix. and xc.; but 'a vapour, that appeareth for a little while, and then vanishes away:' James iv. 14.

Few, perhaps, reflect, when they follow a friend to his grave, that life itself exhibits little more than a funeral procession, where friend follows friend; weeping to-day, and wept for to-morrow. While we are talking of one, another passes: we are alarmed: but behold a third! There is, however, relief in this very reflection: "My friend is gone; but am I weeping, as if I were to *stay?* Is he sent for in the *morning?* in the *afternoon* I shall certainly be called." Inconsolable distress, therefore, may ungird our loins, may waste our hours, and cause us to make fatal mistakes in the journey, but does not bring us forward a single step toward meeting our Friends in that state, where present joys and sorrows will be recollected only as the dream of a distempered night.

If, after many former admonitions, an ENEMY still urged us to climb: and, as we ascended, pointed 'to the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them,' Matt. iv. 8; if our hearts have been the dupes of the vanishing prospect, and our ears eagerly heard the proposal, 'All these things will I give thee,' Matt. iv. 9; let us now hear the voice of a FRIEND, calling us, though in an unexpected way, 'to commune with our heart and be still:' Ps. iv. 4; to know 'at least in this our day of visitation, the things which belong to our peace;' and also what those things are which 'hide them from our eyes:' Luke xix. 42.

It is at such seasons as these, that we more clearly detect the lies of life. It is in the House of Mourning, that, what the Scripture calls, *lying vanities*, lie peculiarly naked and exposed. Let us here examine what so lately dazzled us. What now is the 'purple and fine linen,' Luke xvi. 19, that caught our eye? What is it to fare sumptuously only for a *day?* Who is he that cries, 'Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years: take thine ease: eat, drink, and be merry?' Luke xii. 19. I trust you now feel the deep misery and utter ruin of that dying creature, who can say nothing better to his soul than *this*. You can scarcely help crying out, "What sottishness, what madness this, in a moment so interesting as Life! with a prospect so awful as eternity!"

The truth is, God speaks variously and incessantly to man respecting his prospects both present and future: but present things seize his heart, blind his eyes, stupify his conscience, and carry him away captive. Now "affliction is God speaking louder," and striving with the heart of man: crying, as he has lately in your house, 'Arise and depart: this is not your rest: it is polluted;' and, if you persist in attempting to make a

rest of it, 'will destroy you with a sore destruction:' Micah ii. 10.

Our plan, indeed, is the very reverse of his. We love our native soil, and try to strike our roots deeper and deeper into it: firmly fixed in earth, we would fain draw our whole life, strength, and nourishment from it. And here we should not only 'fade as a leaf,' Isa. lxiv. 6; but, with 'every tree that beareth not good fruit, be hewn down and cast into the fire,' Matt. iii. 10, did not mercy interpose.

We seldom, however, discern mercy in its *first* approach. "Is it *mercy*," say you, "that tears me up by the roots? that cuts the fibres of sweetest union? Does it prune away the finest branches, nip the loveliest buds, and cover the earth with blossoms?" Yes, verily: since the very life of the whole often depends upon the removal of a part, Mercy will wound to heal. Regard to the tree will strip off its most flourishing suckers. The great husbandman will not fail to adopt the sharpest means for the improvement of his choicest plants: 'for every branch that beareth fruit he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit:' John xv. 2. 'Though the Lord cause grief,' yet it is in 'compassion,' and 'according to the multitude of his mercies; for he doth not afflict willinly, nor grieve the children of men,' Lam. iii. 32, 33; but, soon or late, instructs all his children to say, 'I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right; and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me:' Ps. cxix. 75.

Let not, therefore, the change of the present scene discompose, but direct us. It changes, in order to present the only unchangeable one. By thus rending the veils which men try to throw over a dying state, and discovering TEKEL* written on every creature, the most

* *i. e.* "wanting," Dan. v. 27.

careless are often so roused, that they seem to awake and recover themselves: they appear, for a time at least, to become *wise*, to 'understand these things,' and seriously to 'consider their latter end:' Deut. xxxii. 29. May this salutary impression, however, my dear friend, never be worn from *your* mind; but lead you habitually to look from this fading, to that abiding prospect, which is to be found only in the ETERNAL WORLD,—and on which it may be necessary here to drop a reflection or two.

I think you must often have remarked, that the urgency and bustle of present things, not only raise a cloud of dust before our future prospects, but early beget a false principle that the *present* life is the *only* one. You must also have observed, that ten thousand false maxims, which daily fly through the world, take their rise from this prime falsehood. Whereas, in fact, the present life, instead of being the *whole*, is comparatively *nothing*: a *Stage*, a *Porch*, a *Dream*, a weary day's *Journey*. What is this drop, to the Ocean before us? What this moment, to Eternity? As a Theatre, indeed, in which God exhibits the wonders of his providence and grace; or as a Stage, on which we are to act our parts without any opportunity of repetition; the present state is infinitely grand and important: but surely no greater imposition can be put upon the Pilgrim, than to persuade him that he is at *Home;* or to make him forget and drown his eternal interests in such a vision of the night as this life!

Do you not, my dear friend, sensibly perceive this? While you sit here, does not the cloud break, and the mist subside? Have you not already so realized 'a better, that is a heavenly country,' Heb. xi. 16, as to admire him who pitched only a *tent* here, Heb. xi. 9, but steadfastly looked for 'a city that hath founda-

tions,' Heb. xi. 10. Are you not ready to 'take hold of the skirt of this Jew,' saying, 'We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you?' Zech. viii. 23.

Seeing this, you only see truths ever exhibited in the Scriptures; and living principles in all who are 'taught of God,' John vi. 45: for he alone can enable us to use his own discoveries; and how gracious is he, when he removes any object which might prevent our thus seeing Himself, his Kingdom, and his Righteousness! or the removal of which may prove the occasion of our *seeking* them!

Just before the flood, there were doubtless, among their 'men of renown,' Gen. vi. 4, admired projectors: but there appears to have been only one *truly* wise man among them; one who saw and seriously regarded his Prospects. And he, 'being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an Ark for the saving of his house:' Heb. xi. 7. Now such a man is the Christian. He feels 'the world passing away with the lusts thereof, but that he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever:' 1 John ii. 15. "I feel," says he, "that however finely they dress the pageant of this world, it 'passeth by,' 1 Cor. vii. 31. To a creature like me, going, hastening, such an *Ark* is worth more than ten thousand dying worlds. Let the Gay laugh: 'let the Despisers wonder and perish:' Acts xiii. 41: with such Prospects before me I *must* be serious. He, that cannot lie, has revealed the *terrors*, as well as the glories, of a future state: he speaks 'of a worm that dieth not, and a fire that is not quenched,' Mark ix. 44, as well as of 'a fullness of joy and pleasures for evermore, Ps. xvi. 11. I must not, I dare not, shut my eyes against these awful realities. I will not sacrifice my soul to a jest; nor miss the single opportunity

afforded me for its salvation. He, that calls for my whole heart, is worthy of it: while the things which have hitherto engrossed it, though they cannot *satisfy*, I find can *ruin* it. 'I will therefore arise and go to my Father,' Luke xv. 18—to my Saviour, who has promised to 'cast out none that come unto Him.' John vi. 37. Yea, doubtless, I 'count all things but loss, that I may be found in him,' Phil. iii, 8 9, the true ARK, the only REFUGE, which God has provided for perishing sinners."

Such a man, indeed, is the *Christian;* but the Christian, after all, is but a *Man*. In a state like this, he needs to be continually reminded of his own principles. Even the *wise* Virgin slumbers though the Bridegroom is at hand. But a cry is often made in the family, before that which will at midnight awaken the world: one like that in the house of Pharaoh for his first-born; or that so lately heard in *yours:* a cry which, while it rouses the sleeper, and fills his eyes with tears and his heart with pangs, often produces such views of God and of the present and eternal state, as all other monitors would have attempted in vain.

Here, then, my afflicted, but, I hope, instructed, Friend, let us study the heavenly science of gaining by *losses*, and rising by *depressions*. Leaving the wilderness, like Moses, let us ascend the mount of scriptural discovery, and survey a prospect of which his was but a shadow. Let us look from vicissitude and desolation, to what alone is 'incorruptible, undefiled, and fadeth not away,' 1 Pet. i. 4: and, in the house of affliction and death, let us contemplate a House 'not made with hands, eternal in the heavens:' 2 Cor. v. 1. How refreshing, to look from a family bereft of its companions and comforts to 'Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem! to an innumerable com-

pany of angels, and to the general assembly and church of the first-born which are written in heaven!' Heb. xii. 22, 23—the only family, which cannot be divided: —the only friendship, which shall not disappoint our warmest expectation.

"Glorious as this prospect is," perhaps you are ready to reply, "I have been long in the habit of viewing it very indistinctly. My attention has been so fixed on one below, that I live looking *into* the Grave rather than *beyond* it. My spirits are so broken, my heart so wounded, and my eyes so dim with watching and weeping, that I can hardly read what is before me, or recollect what I read. If serious reflection composes me for a few moments, I soon relapse, and seem to lose sight of every support. I indeed severely feel what you say concerning the *present* life, but I view the glories of the future like a starving creature, who, looking through the gate of the wealthy, surveys a plenty which but increases his anguish."

There is, however, this difference, at least, between your cases: the plenty which *you* see is *yours*, if you are really willing to accept it. You never received a gift so freely bestowed or so suited to your necessity, as that 'Gift of God,' which is 'eternal life through Jesus Christ:' Rom. vi. 23.

In order to view this more distinctly, let us consider the sufficiency of

Our PROVISIONS—For 'Wisdom hath built her house, she hath killed her beasts, she hath mingled her wine, and furnished her table. She also crieth upon the highest places of the city. Whoso is simple let him turn in hither, and to him that wanteth understanding she saith, Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled:—forsake the foolish, and live:' Prov. ix. 1—6.

Man, indeed, is daily reminded by the Thorns at his feet, by the Sweat of his brow, and by the Dust to which he is returning, that his paradise is *lost*:* but paradise *regained* is considered rather as a mere idea: a subject for Poetry. That book, however, which I hope you have chosen as your best companion, in the house of mourning, like the vision of Jacob, not only shows the heavens opened, but discovers a gracious medium of communication and intercourse, as it were 'a ladder let down from heaven to earth:'† a medium so suited to the state of man, that the weakest and vilest, who is humble enough to take hold of it as God's ordinance, advance a step at a time, and call for strength to proceed, may climb by it from Earth to Heaven.‡

Are you, my dear friend, among the number of those, who stand before God not only as stripped of their *comforts*, but humbled under sin as the cause of all the desolations with which our fallen state abounds? Open your book at the LXIst chapter of Isaiah. You will there perceive that most precious privilege, paradise restored: the Creator descending to the condition and wants of the creature, and once more holding *communion* with him. To the *broken-hearted*, the *captive*, and the *mourner*, is here shown One mighty to save and to relieve. And, that such should not mistake their friend, our Lord, when he stood up in the synagogue to read, selected this passage: and, having read it, closed the book with saying, 'This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears:' Luke iv. 21. "I am," as if he had said, "this Deliverer and 'Desire of nations, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted: blessed are ye that hunger now; for ye shall be filled; blessed are ye that

* Gen. iii. 18, 19. † Gen. xxviii. 12.

‡ Compare Gen. xxviii. with John i. 51.

weep now; for ye shall laugh:'" Hag. ii. 7. Heb xiii. 8. Matt. v. 4. Luke vi. 21.

I scarcely need observe, that, in an address like this, (a bow drawn at a venture,) formal statements of the different topics would be improper; and therefore, I shall not attempt to describe, in their order, the various Provisions comprehended in that scheme of redemption, usually termed the Gospel. It may be necessary, however, to remark, that the whole is a proposal to the *broken heart;* answering all its objections, and meeting all its wants: and that such a proposal will be cordially received, only in proportion as this disposition prevails.

As it is the *Sick* who best knows how to value a physician, the *Debtor* a surety, and the *Criminal* a pardon; so it is the awakened conscience alone, which will embrace a constitution calculated to humble the *pride*, and mortify the *corruptions*, as well as relieve the *wants* of man. 'If without shedding of blood there can be no remission,' Heb. ix. 22; he, who is earnest to obtain it, will rejoice to find it though on the accursed tree:' and, however the 'preaching of this cross' shall be esteemed 'foolishness among them that perish,' 1 Cor. i. 18; such an one will not only rejoice in the provision, but magnify the means. 'God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world:' Gal. vi. 14.

Our Lord represents the blessings of his kingdom under the parable of a magnificent feast, which a 'King made for the marriage of his Son:' but points out the ruin of the world in its indisposition to accept his gracious proposal, when 'all things were ready,' and invitations repeatedly sent. 'They made light of it,' and went 'their ways!' However different their pursuits, they all agreed to reject the invitation. They began

with *one consent* to make excuse: some urged reasons, and some abused the messengers: Matt. xxii. 1—6. But what is this, more than the history of human nature in every age?

Let us, however, my dear friend, never forget that the gate lately mentioned, though strait, is *open;* and that only *unbelief* and *indisposition* stand without. Christ has declared that all things are *ready:* may his gracious influence, accompanying this humbling providence, form in you a spiritual taste for them! Certain I am, that whenever this is attained, his *name* will be 'as ointment poured forth:' Cant. i. 3. It will give a savour even to obsolete poetry:

> Christ is a path—if any be misled:
> He is a robe—if any naked be:
> If any chance to hunger—he is bread:
> If any be a bondman—he is free:
> If any be but weak—how strong is he:
> To dead men, life he is—to sick men, health:
> To blind men, sight—and to the needy, wealth:
> A pleasure, without loss—a treasure, without stealth.

To prepare the heart for the reception of this treasure, as a God of order, he is pleased to use a system of means; one of which I hope he is now employing for your soul's health.

I love to indulge hope; for affliction is a seed time. And let me freely inquire, since God has called you aside, has spoken so emphatically, and you have had leisure for serious meditation, do not the Provisions of the Gospel appear new, sufficient, and exactly suited to your case? Do you not mark that Gold, which the thief cannot steal? that Foundation, which no tempest can shake? that Life, over which death hath no power? and that Peace, which the world can neither give nor take away? Does not the religion of Jesus, so forgot-

ten and degraded among men, stand forward now as the 'one thing needful?' Does not his friendship appear now to be 'that better part,' which 'shall not be taken away?' Luke x. 42; and which alone can help in extremities? In the wreck of human affairs, indeed, it is, that God often makes his truth appear; and causes his Gospel, like a plank thrown out to the perishing mariner, to be properly known and prized.

"These are the great occasions which force the mind to take refuge in religion: when we have no help in ourselves, what can remain but that we look up to a higher and a greater Power? and to what hope may we not raise our eyes and hearts when we consider that the GREATEST *Power is the* BEST.

"Surely there is no (truly wise) man, who, thus afflicted, does not seek succour in the Gospel, which has brought *Life and Immortality to Light.* The precepts of EPICURUS, who teaches us to endure what the Laws of the Universe make necessary, may silence, but not *content* us. The dictates of Zeno, who commands us to look with indifference on external things, may dispose us to conceal our sorrow, but cannot *assuage* it. Real alleviation of the loss of friends, and rational tranquillity in the prospect of our own dissolution, can be received only from the promises of him, in whose hands are life and death; and from the assurances of another and better state, in which all tears will be wiped from the eyes, and the whole soul shall be filled with joy. Philosophy may infuse STUBBORNNESS, but Religion only can give PATIENCE."*

In health and ease, ingenious speculations may amuse and satisfy us; but I think you now feel with me, that, when he 'takes away the desire of our eyes with a stroke,' Ezek. xxiv. 16, our sorrows are too deep to be

* Johnson.

alleviated by the mere Orator or Philosopher. We even turn in disgust from him who would thus trifle with our case. We need a support, which the world cannot afford. "I faint," says the wounded soul: "I want an almighty arm to lean on now; yea a very tender and compassionate one too;—one like that of the Son of Man. I need 'a merciful and faithful High-Priest, who, having been tempted, knows how to succour the tempted:' Heb. ii. 17, 18: that Man of sorrows, that Brother born for adversity, who being *acquainted with grief*, can enter into my case and commune with me in all the peculiarities of my distress. I now need one, who can quiet me on his own breast, and speak to me with his own voice, 'Weep not,' the child 'is not dead, but sleepeth:' Luke viii. 52. 'Weep not, thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, —when thou passest through the waters I will be with thee:' Isa. xliii. 2. It is true, this is the land of death; but 'I am the resurrection and the life:' John xi. 25. This is indeed 'a dry and thirsty land where no water is,' Ps. lxiii. 1: but I will lead you to 'fountains of living waters:' I will 'wipe away all tears from your eyes:'" Rev. vii. 17.

You are ready, perhaps, to say, "'Oh that I knew where I might find him!' But religion has been with me rather a case of necessity, than the high privilege of communing with such a comforter. I feel the misery of living at such a distance from my Heavenly Friend, (especially at this time,) but want liberty to approach nearer. Could I indeed repose on the bosom you just mentioned——'but, alas! my understanding is clouded, my faith weak, sense strong, and Satan busy in filling my thoughts with false notions, difficulties, and doubts respecting a future state and the efficacy of prayer.'* Though I see very gracious proposals made to returning

* Lady Russel's Letters.

sinners, I tremble to venture. Death itself reminds me of transgression. My thoughts fly every where but to God."

We readily acknowledge, that, among other views of death, it should be regarded as the *wages of sin.* Rom. vi. 23. It is also natural for convinced sinners to tremble before a Judge who charges even angels with folly. However Pride may boast, or Ignorance presume, he, who measures by the standard of a law which is so spiritual as to notice a corrupt desire, will conclude with the Apostle, that 'every mouth must be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God:' Rom. iii. 19. A view of the divine character, and of his own, led not only a Publican to smite upon his breast as the seat of apostasy and pollution, and cry, 'God be merciful to me a sinner,' Luke xviii. 13; but so perfect and upright a man as Job to 'abhor himself,' and repent 'in dust and ashes:' Job xlii. 6. I may add, that, as *we* become proficients in their school, we shall be more ready to *confess* than to *complain:* we shall learn to justify God, in any instance of his righteous displeasure: and humbly own, that he has laid upon us far less than our iniquities deserve: Ps. ciii. 10.

But, while the Christian, as a penitent, looks upon Him, whom he has pierced, and *mourns;* as a believer, he looks at Him, who was wounded for transgression, and *hopes.* He finds it as desperate to doubt the *remedy,* as to deny the *disorder.* Having formerly rushed headlong with the *presumptuous,* he now fears perishing with the *fearful* and *unbelieving:* Rev. xxi. 8. He sees an atonement of God's own providing: he pleads, upon God's own authority, the merit of that blood 'which cleanseth from all sin:' 1 John i. 7. And, by thus receiving 'the record which God gives of his Son, he sets his seal to it that God is true:' John iii. 33.

Is this, my dear friend, in any degree your case? Fearful, wandering, and wounded as your heart is, does it yet discover a resting-place? Instead of wishing to evade the charge of "manifold sins and wickedness committed by thought, word, and deed against the Divine Majesty;" is "the remembrance of them grievous, and the burden of them intolerable?" Do you sincerely desire to be freed from this burden, and to enter into 'the glorious liberty of the children of God!' that heavenly communion and rest that has been mentioned? 'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!' John i. 29. 'Behold him exalted to be a Prince, and a Saviour, to give repentance and forgiveness of sins!' Acts v. 31. Come to him as a sinner; and touch, with humble confidence, but the 'hem of his garment,' and you shall be 'made whole:' Matt. ix. 21. Wait upon him, and you shall obtain both strength and liberty; 'for if the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed:' John viii. 36.

Respecting your sense of weakness, let me add, that the *Provision* made for fallen nature, and corresponding to its various wants, is at once a *character* and an *evidence* of our Religion. It is a glorious peculiarity of it, that its *promises* correspond with its *precepts*. To use the language which best conveys its meaning, 'The kingdom of God is not in WORD' only, 'but' also 'in POWER:' 1 Cor. iv. 20. He, who enlightens the blind eyes, undertakes to 'strengthen the weak hands, and to confirm the feeble knees:' Isa. xxxv. 3—6. The Spirit of wisdom and understanding is sent to be also a Spirit of *might*, of *grace*, and of *supplication*.* It is peculiar to *our* Teacher, that he *enables*, as well as instructs, his disciples: he first presents a prospect of the inheritance; then, a *title* to it through his death; and, together

* Compare Zech. xii. 10, with Eph. i. 19.

with these, affords *strength* to rise and pursue it. Turn to the XXXVIth chapter of Ezekiel, and you will find your case amply provided for:* but recollect that it is added, 'I will yet for this be inquired of, to do it for them:' Ezek. xxxvi. 37. 'Is any afflicted, let him pray:' James v. 13.

But I must not pass by the temptation which you mentioned respecting the efficacy of prayer. You will, perhaps, too readily object, "Here it is that I sink. I prayed earnestly for the life of the deceased. I thought at one time I saw signs of a recovery; but the event makes me fear that I was not heard, and that I have no friend left now in Earth or Heaven."

A little consideration will, I hope, show you your mistake; and prove that a petition may be graciously accepted, when its particular object is not granted. Did not our LORD declare that his Father heard him always? John xi. 42. Are we not told, that when, 'in the days of his flesh he had offered up prayers, with strong crying and tears, unto him that was able to save him from death, he was HEARD' in that 'he feared?' Heb. v. 7. But consider, I pray you, how he was heard: certainly not by having the cup *taken away*, (a cup at which human nature, however perfect, must recoil,) but in being accepted when he prayed; in being supported, while he drank it; and in victoriously accomplishing his grand design, though drinking it to the very dregs.

To come nearer to our own condition, we find St. PAUL going to CHRIST for deliverance from some severe trial, which he calls 'a thorn in the flesh.' He tells us that he also was heard; and in the same way as his Master: not by being released from suffering, but by receiving something more honourable and advantageous; namely, that *Grace*, which not only sup-

* Ezek. xxxvi. 25—27.

ports a Believer through his trials, but puts a healing virtue into them.

Far removed from the holy resignation of our Master, we too much resemble in our prayers the impatience of our children. I remember when a sick one of mine had some medicine to take, he called loudly to me to come and assist him against those who were endeavouring to force it down. He probably wondered at my refusing to relieve him; but the little sufferer did not consider, though often told, that he was not to be helped in that way: he did not recollect, that while I tenderly felt his cry, the very compassion I felt for him, and the desire I had to relieve him, kept me from taking away the bitter draught.

The truth is, and it is a truth frequently told us, that our Heavenly Father always sends his children the things they ask, or better things: he answers their petitions, in *kind*, or in *kindness*. But, while we think only of our *Ease*, he consults our *Profit*. We are urgent about the *Body*: He, about the *Soul*. We call for present *Comfort:* He considers our everlasting *Rest:* and, therefore, when he sends not the very things we ask, he hears us by sending greater 'than we can ask or think:' Eph. iii. 20.

'Is any,' therefore, 'afflicted, let him pray;' not only in the public sanctuary, or in the retired closet, but let him consider that there is 'a new and living way, consecrated through the vail,' Heb. x. 20; of a Redeemer's human nature, from every scene of retirement or action to a MERCY SEAT; where he 'satisfies the longing soul,' and fills the 'hungry soul with goodness;' especially of 'such as sit in darkness and the shadow of Death:' Ps. cvii. 9, 10. Our very misery and infirmity should, in defect of other preachers, point out the seat of our relief; and direct such frail and depraved crea-

tures to the common Friend of the *weary* and *heavy laden.* Pouring into his bosom all our complaints, we at once obey his command, honour his character, and obtain his assistance: 'for we have not a High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us, therefore, come boldly unto the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in every time of need:' Heb. iv. 15, 16.

Is it not a time of need with you? Endeavour, at his command, to approach, with a holy confidence, for the 'supply of all your need according to his riches in glory,' Phil. iv. 19: and, at this time particularly, for the illumination and comfort of his Holy Spirit. He, whom you supplicate, not only *invites*, but *reasons* with you: 'If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?' Luke xi. 13.

The religion of education and custom obtains, more or less, every where; but serious, vital, spiritual religion is 'a case of necessity' with us all. We summon our forces, we ranscak our stores, 'spend our money for that which is not bread, and our labour for that which satisfieth not:' Isa. lv. 2. We look every way, and call to every thing; till each, in return, loudly replies, 'It is not in me:' Job xxviii. 14. Well, indeed, will it be, if after all our fruitless efforts, we are brought to feel that the provisions of the Gospel are the only *bread* for a hungry soul, the only *balm* for a wounded heart.

However foreign, my dear friend, these truths were from your consideration, when we first sat down together, if it please him who 'commanded the light to shine out of darkness,' 2 Cor. iv. 6, to shine into your heart, effectually discover the 'exceeding riches of his

grace' in these provisions; then, though *you* sit weeping over your loss, we are assured from unquestionable authority, that angels are rejoicing* for your unspeakable gain. We are certain also, that not only every *real* friend will cry, "'This day is salvation come to the house,' Luke xix. 9, where we lately wept;" but that, drying your tears, you yourself will be compelled to express your grateful sense of the correction you now deplore, and sing, with a companion and fellow proficient in the school of affliction,†

Father, I bless thy gentle hand:
How kind was thy chastising rod,
That forc'd my conscience to a stand,
And brought my wand'ring soul to God!

Foolish and vain, I went astray
Ere I had felt thy scourges, Lord:
I left my guide—I lost my way:
But now I love and keep thy word.

And, here, suffer me to drop a word or two respecting these,

Our COMPANIONS in the House of Mourning. Society is peculiarly pleasant when we are benighted on a journey: and especially that of a citizen of the place to which we are going. It is encouraging to travel with those, who are convinced, that, if 'they are chastened of the Lord,' it is, 'that they should not be condemned with the world:' 1 Cor. xi. 32. 'Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven: Matt. v. 3. Here they are educating for it. Here, they sit at the foot of the Cross, and receive lessons of faith and patience, of humility and temperance.

'Blessed' also 'are the pure in heart; for they' here 'see God:' Matt. v. 3; who never so unveils himself

* Luke xv. 10. † Ps. cxix. 67, 71.

as in seasons of distress. In sight of his character and word, they bow before his providence, yea trust him in the stroke; for hope is made to arise here, as a light in darkness. Here the spiritual Husbandman is taught to 'go forth weeping, and bearing the precious seed' of faith and love, penitence and prayer! assured 'that he shall come again with Joy, bringing his sheaves with him:' Ps. cxxvi. 6. Here also, the heavenly Scholar acquires 'the tongue of the learned, that he should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary:' Isa. l. 4. And here the true Soldier of Jesus Christ is found 'fighting the good fight of faith, and laying hold of eternal life,' 1 Tim. vi. 12, in the very valley and shadow of death. He is here instructed to 'cast down imaginations,' 2 Cor. x. 5; those reasonings which peculiarly infest and darken the House of Mourning; and, taking the 'shield of faith and the sword of the Spirit,' he 'wrestles not only with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers:' Eph. vi. 12—17; a mighty though secret conflict, which God shall one day declare to the world; and which, when explained, will leave its most celebrated heroes 'silent in darkness:' 1 Sam. ii. 9.

'Go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock:' Cant. i. 8; for in this house they have all left the prints of their feet. Here stood Jacob weeping over his beloved Rachel; Gen. xxxv. 20; and here Aaron deplored his sons: Lev. x. 3. Here we trace the steps of David going up to his chamber, and crying with a loud voice, 'Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son! my son!' 2 Sam. xviii. 33; and those of Ezekiel, who, forbidden to cry, silently resigned the 'desire of his eyes' to the stroke: Ezek. xxiv. 16. But enumeration is vain. Hither came all the sons of God, the only-begot-

ten not excepted; for JESUS himself stood 'and wept' at the grave of a friend: John xi. 35.

With such company, is it not far 'better to go to the House of Mourning than to the House of Feasting?' Eccl. vii. 2. I knew one of these, 'a man who had seen affliction by a rod,' Lam. iii. 1; like yours: a man who walked and wept in solitude, but with no expectation of being overheard. There is something sacred in grief, and we cannot listen to its effusions with too much candour: great candour, indeed, is here required; but, if afforded, it may procure you at least a *Companion* as you pass through this vale of tears.

. . . . . .

. . . . . 'Set thee up way-marks:' Jer. xxxi. 21: "I desire here to set them up, and to record the severest of my visitations in the house of my pilgrimage. Lord, prepare me for the next.

"I perceive I could not have properly sympathised with a friend in a similar case, before this stroke. I could not have *understood* it.

"I have, at times, so felt the importance of eternal things, that I thought the loss of any present comfort would be tolerable: but I had no idea how much depended on being *ready*, when the Son of Man came in such a providence.

"I feel I now stand in the right position to see the *world* and the *word*. They both appear under aspects entirely new.

"When I find 'my joys pack'd up and gone,' my heart slain, the delight of my eyes taken away: when I recollect who is gone before her, who is following, and what remains for the world to offer; my heart cries, 'I loath it: I would not live alway:' Job vii. 16; I thank God, that I am also to go.

"I perceive I did not know how much my life was

bound up in the life of a creature. When *she* went, nothing seemed left. One is not; and the rest seem a few thin and scattered remains.

"And yet, how much better for my lamb to be suddenly housed: to slip unexpectedly into the fold to which I was conducting her, than remain exposed here! perhaps become a victim!

"I cried, 'O Lord, spare my child!' He did: but not as I meant. He snatched it from danger, and took it to his own home.

"I have often prayed, 'Lord, soften my heart! humble my pride! destroy my levity!' I knew enough of his way to fear the *means:* and he has, in mercy towards me, regarded my *soul* more than my *feelings.*

"I prayed earnestly for her life. Duty compelled me to say, 'Thy will be done:' but I *meant* nothing.

"O my God, how long hast thou come 'seeking fruit on this tree!' Luke xiii. 7. How much hast thou done to cultivate it! Shall it still remain fruitless? Shall it be cut down after all?

"My passions forged impressions that she would live; but I now plainly perceive I am called to regard *God,* and not impressions.

"I have been long like one in a fever, attended at times with a strong delirium: I begged hard that I might not be bled; but he meant a cure and pierced my heart.

"Oh how slender, how brittle, the thread on which hang all my earthly joys!

"I wish ever to be asking, 'Am I ready, should he send again, and take ***, or ***, or myself?' 'Setting my house in order,' Isa. xxxviii. 1, will not make death approach sooner; but, that it will render his coming much *easier,* I feel by sad experience.

"When I pass by the blaze of dissipation and intem-

perance, I feel a moment's relief. I say to my heart, 'Be still;'—at least she is not left to follow these *ignes fatui*. How much better is even the grave for my T******, than 'the end of those things?' Rom. vi. 21.

"It is vain for me to wish, as I have done, to leave the world, and go to my father, that I might inquire into the whole of the case; the reasons, the steps, the issue, &c. In a short time I shall; but he says enough *now*, if I have ears to hear.

"In the mean time, help me, O my God and Father, to recollect that I received this drop of earthly comfort from a spring which still remains! Help me to feel that nothing 'essential' is altered! 'for with thee is the fountain of life,' Ps. xxxvi. 9. Part of myself is already gone to thee: help what remains to follow."

If this humble attempt to improve your affliction has been attended with any success, you will readily admit a few concluding hints with respect to

Our DUTY in such circumstances.

And one of the first and principal duties of the state is, as hath been expressed, to ACKNOWLEDGE GOD in it.

It was charged upon some, that they 'returned not to him that smote them,' nor 'sought the Lord' in their distress: Isa. ix. 13. On the contrary, the clear apprehension which Job had of a divine hand in his afflictions, is as instructive as his patience under them. While Grief 'rent his mantle,' Faith 'fell down and worshipped:—The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord:' Job i. 21. Let us learn from him never to lose sight of the *Author* by an undue regard to the mere *circumstances* of our loss. We may think and speak of the symptoms and stages of the late removal; of the physicians, of the remedies, &c. in their supposed right or wrong application; but not so as to forget that an unerring Providence presided

over the whole, yea, actually *conducted* every part on reasons as righteous as they are inscrutable.

Whatever may appear to *us* peculiar in the sick chamber, the whole was but God's intended method of removing one who had lived his *full* (i. e. his *appointed*) time. 'Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee: thou hast appointed him his bounds which he cannot pass:' Job xiv. 6. Instead of fixing our attention upon means and creatures, of which we know so very little, let us turn to him, who wrought by these instruments, and merely effected his own determinations by them. 'Cease from man, for wherein is he to be accounted of?' Isa. ii. 22. Let not the creature hide the Creator, nor present things prove the fatal screen of the furure; but, in every occurrence, mark the Great Cause, 'of whom, and through whom, and to whom, are all things:' Rom. xi. 36—who numbereth the 'very hairs of our head,' and without whom even a 'sparrow falls not to the ground:' Matt. x. 29, 30.

While others, therefore, are wandering without an object, and bereaved without a comforter, yea are going to their worst enemy for relief, let us endeavour to say with Peter, "Lord, 'to whom shall we go,' John vi. 68, but to THEE?" Consider the Great Physician as now proposing a most serious question to your conscience: 'Wilt thou be made whole?' John v. 6. May the language of your heart be that of the Apostle's: 'If by ANY means!' Phil. iii. 11. Then, though seemingly swallowed up of this grief, like Jonah, you shall find a resource *in* it, and finally be preserved *by* it.* This dart, like that which once pierced an imposthume in battle, shall bring health with its wound: and you shall be enabled, with many who are gone before you, to say,

* Jonah ii. 7—10.

'The Lord hath chastened me sore; but he hath not given me over unto death:' Ps. cxviii. 18.

Duty also directs you to MODERATE YOUR GRIEF.

Our Heavenly Father, who 'knows our frame, and remembers that we are but dust,' Ps. ciii. 14, allows us to mourn when he afflicts us. He often, in his providence, calls us to it, and charges us to 'weep with them that weep:' Rom xii. 15. But he admonishes us also of a danger on each hand:—'My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord; nor faint when thou art rebuked of him:' Heb. xii. 5. If we seriously profess Christianity, our very profession implies, (not only a subjection to our Lord's will, but) that we have special resources in our affliction; several of which have already been named:——that among other of our privileges, there is 'a peace from God which passeth all understanding, to keep our hearts and minds' (Phil. iv. 7) through life and death: and that we have many reasons for 'not sorrowing as others who have no hope:' 1 Thess. iv. 13. Besides which, Christians have a post of honour to maintain: a 'high calling' (Phil. iii. 14) to demonstrate and commend. We shall, like the pilot in a storm, be brought to our principles: and, as 'sorrowful, yet always rejoicing,' 2 Cor. vi. 10, should prove that we have them not now to learn.

On the contrary, there is such a thing as nursing and cherishing our grief: employing a "busy meddling memory to muster up past endearments," and personate a vast variety of tender and heart-rending circumstances. There is a tearing open the wound afresh by images and remembrances: and thereby multiplying those pangs, which constitute the very bitterness of death itself. Our melancholy exceedingly affects this voluntary torture: it seeks expedients; and will listen to the most unjust and aggravated accusations, which can approach

a tender conscience respecting the deceased. But conscience should rather be concerned to repress such a disposition. It is a temptation. It desperately strives to retain what God has determined to remove. In some cases, it seeks to penetrate an abyss, which he forbids even conjecture to explore: and, while it unfits the mourner for the pressing duties of his station, it leads to that 'sorrow of the world which worketh death' (2 Cor. vii. 10) to his body, his soul, and his Christian character. How different and superior the sentiments of DAVID! 'His servants said unto him, What thing is this that thou hast done? Thou didst fast and weep for the child, while it was alive; but, when the child was dead, thou didst rise and eat bread. And he said, While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, Who can tell whether God will be gracious to me, that the child may live: but, now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I SHALL GO TO HIM, BUT HE SHALL NOT RETURN TO ME:' 2 Sam. xii. 21—23.

Present circumstances also admonish you to KNOW YOUR OPPORTUNITY; and to improve this season, as peculiarly favourable for spiritual advancement.

There is a *tide* in the concerns of religion: the Scripture calls it the *day of visitation*, and sends us to the *stork* and to the *swallow* for instruction respecting it: Luke xix. 44. Jer. viii. 7. Your heart is now soft, its fascinations withdrawn, and the call loud and affecting: endeavour, therefore, to take the benefit of a remedy which you feel so expensive.

If, in a sense, "smitten Friends are Angels sent on errands full of love," instead of weeping over their tombs, let us listen to the voice which properly arises from them; especially if it be our privilege to bury one, who, like Abel, 'being dead yet speaketh,' Heb. xi. 4,

and who would be ready to say to his mourners, "'Weep not for me, but for yourselves, and for your children,' Luke xxiii. 28. 'I have fought the good fight: I have finished my course: I have kept the faith,' 2 Tim. iv. 7, and received my crown. I cannot now come to weep with you, but you may ascend and rejoice with me, where there is 'no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, for the former things are passed away:' Rev. xxi. 4. If you truly love me, prepare to follow me. If you earnestly wish to see me again, seek not the living among the dead, but arise and become 'a follower of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises:' Heb. vi. 12. Take that heavenly lamp which 'shineth as a light in a dark place:' walk humbly by it, 'till the day dawn, and the day star arise in your heart,' 2 Pet. i. 19.—Haste, my beloved, toward the things which 'eye hath not seen,' 1 Cor. ii. 9; and, ere the eternal day break, and the present shadows flee away, 'run with patience the race set before you, looking unto Jesus,' Heb. xii. 1, 2. How will my cup overflow to meet you among those who daily 'come hither out of great tribulation;' and, having 'washed their robes in the blood of the lamb, serve him day and night in his temple!'" Rev. vii. 14, 15.

Embrace every method which God hath recommended for maintaining communion with him, and obtaining relief from him:—the various ordinances of his House; the encouragements of his Word; the society of his Children; and especially, Prayer. Often speak to him who 'seeth in secret,' and 'is nigh unto all that call upon him,' though with the Woman of Canaan you can only say, 'Lord, help me:' Matt. vi. 18. Ps. cxlv. 18. Matt. xv. 25. Not only a high commendation, but a miracle followed her request. She urged it under the greatest discouragements, but you have

both a command and a promise: 'Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me:' Ps. l. 15.

And, while you search the Scriptures, and attend the Church, you will at once be instructed and encouraged by marking, in both, those footsteps which we lately considered. They are, indeed, not so explicit in the latter; but attention to the scriptural account of the Christian character, will greatly assist you in distinguishing real Christians from those, who, equally forward and corrupt, have at all times assumed their name and mixed in their society to their grief and scandal.* Leaving these unhappy *Exceptions* to their proper Judge, following the unerring *Rule* which he has put into your hand, and those who walk by it; particularly such as are your companions in affliction. You will see them passing before you with not only the same wounds in their hearts, but almost the same words in their lips. Study their course: mark their progress: observe how they hold his arm, plead at his throne, repose in his bosom, and magnify his truth, who walks with them in a furnace, which, like that of the three children, burns nothing but their bonds.†

But 'who is sufficient for these things?'—A fourth direction will serve for a reply. To improve the opportunity you discern, and to keep pace with those you approve, SEEK DIVINE ASSISTANCE; or, as St. Paul has expressed it, 'Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus:' 2 Tim. ii. 1.

If on the one hand, Religion has vast proposals to make; on the other, to be truly religious is a mighty Aim, and can be accomplished only 'through HIM that loved use:' Rom. viii. 37. Opposing omnipotence to difficulty, was their *secret*, who so gloriously overcame

* Phil. iii. 18, 19. † Dan. iii. 25.

a world that was not worthy of them: read their history in the XIth chapter of the Hebrews, and see what an implicit reliance, called Faith,—a 'seeing Him who is invisible,' will perform. That invaluable record seems to say, 'Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded:' Ps. xxii. 4, 5.

We are, indeed, called to *aim* and to *act*, and have the greatest promises annexed to the endeavour: but are as frequently reminded that 'we are not sufficient of ourselves, to think any thing as of ourselves,' but that 'our sufficiency is of God:' 2 Cor. iii. 5. Christ encourages no one to advance on the ground of his own *strength*, any more than on that of his own *desert:* he is as jealous of the power of his arm, as of the merit of his blood. He admitted infirmity and misery to be presented as a *complaint*, but never as an *objection*.

I have observed it not uncommon for this to be a season of peculiar temptation. A spiritual enemy stands ready to defeat every spiritual opportunity: but our help is near; and our example, in such conflicts, excellent. 'For this thing I besought the Lord thrice: and he said unto me, My GRACE is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness.' May you be enabled to add, with the Apostle, 'Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me:' 2 Cor. xii. 8, 9.

Again, that you may seek cheerfully this assistance,

REGARD YOUR ENCOURAGEMENTS.

To recover our alienated minds, and gain our confidence, God meets us in a way suited to our necessities and to our fears. Resist, as the vilest temptation, any doubt of that 'Good-will to Man,' which was sung at the Redeemer's birth. What hath God not done in order to commend his love? By every expression of ten-

der concern, he, in the person of a *Man of Sorrows*, invites the guilty, the weary, the trembling, and the tempted, to come unto him; assuring them that he will neither 'break the bruised reed,' nor 'quench the smoking flax:' Matt. xii. 20.

If 'God is love,' 1 John iv. 16, "Christ is God, stooping to the senses, and speaking to the heart of man:" ever saying, "Look to my Cross, take my Yoke, and lean upon my Arm, and ye shall find rest." He sought the House of Mourning to comfort the sisters of Lazarus: he met a widow following her only child, and 'when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not:' Luke vii. 13. May he meet you at this time, my dear friend, with consolations which none but himself can afford! and then, at the very grave, shall 'that saying be brought to pass, Death is swallowed up in victory:' 1 Cor. xv. 54. Let such fear as despise our heavenly *Friend*, our *Prospects*, *Provisions*, *Companions*, and sense of *Duty*. God with us, and all things in God, is light in darkness, life in death. The words, which revived him, who styles himself 'your brother and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ,' Rev. i. 9, remain to cheer a solitude darker, if possible, than his: 'Fear not: I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen: and have the keys of hell and of death:' Rev. i. 17, 18.

To conclude: the late event solemnly repeats its author's charge, BE YE ALSO READY: Matt. xxiv. 44.

Your friend is gone: your following is certain: it may be sudden: it may be next. But, should it take place this night, and find you provided with nothing better for the change than the miserable subterfuges of the profane, or the scarcely less miserable supports of

the formal, what an alarm (if you are not left to the most affecting delusion or stupidity) will it occasion! What an awful transition, to pass from the SAVIOUR to the JUDGE! without love to him; without even an acquaintance with him: unwilling, unreconciled, unrenewed!—and to him, who has so often invited you, warned you, and, at times, affected your conscience with the truths which we have been considering! What a subject for eternal reflection. 'You would not come to him that you might have life:' John v. 40.

God forbid, however, that this should be *your* case! I only suppose it, lest it should: and it is too common to render the supposition improper. Erom such a danger we cannot be too secure; and, therefore, having lately seen how soon 'the night cometh when no man can work,' John ix. 4, let us seek *to-day*, in the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, that peace and safety, which you must be conscious can never be found out of it, and which it may be too late to seek to-morrow.

Some things belonging to our important change are wisely hid from us. Nothing, however, is more plain than that it is *near;* and, therefore, demands our most serious attention: that it is finally *decisive*, Matt. xxv. 46; and, therefore, warns us to watch against those errors which eternity cannot rectify; and, that the hour is *uncertain;* and, therefore, calls us to stand prepared. With our *loins girded*, and our *lights burning*, may we thus wait for our Lord.

IMPRESSED with such views, I have often wished to take the afflicted by the hand, and lead them to a Resource which their passions have obscured. I have wished them to see that the Christian Hope is then most alive and full of immortality, when every other hope perishes. These wishes, and the request of a

friend, (who was solicitous to obtain something of this kind more compendious than he had yet seen) have drawn from me some imperfect hints. Imperfect, however, as they are, like a few words, presented by the road's side to the eye of a weary traveller, they may afford you some present direction and relief. And should he, who is pleased to employ the feeblest means in his greatest work, conduct you by them (though but a single step on your way) towards a *Morning without clouds*——a *House* without *mourning*,—the service of your affectionate friend will obtain a high reward.

FRIENDLY ADVICE

FROM

A MINISTER TO THE SERVANTS OF HIS PARISH.

He, that hearkeneth unto counsel, is wise.—PROV. xii. 15.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

THE Author of this Address calls himself your FRIEND, because he wishes you well, and would serve you to the utmost of his power. If he has not silver and gold, such as he has he freely gives. He has been taught himself, that there are truths more valuable than either; and he would fain teach you the same: 'For wisdom is a defence, and money is a defence; but the excellency of knowledge is, that wisdom giveth LIFE to them that have it:' Eccl. vii. 12.

I have an easy access to many of those whom you serve; and can remind them of their duty privately, as well as from the pulpit: but some of their servants I have no opportunity of conversing with; and therefore have composed the present little Tract for your use.

A minister, who rightly regards his situation, feels an affection for every class of his people: as the spiritual parent of a large family, he has a concern for every part of it; and, as the servant of Him who made himself the servant of all, he cannot overlook those who have a name so like his own.

But the service I am endeavouring to render you will very much depend upon your being *willing* to be served. There are minds in so unhappy a state, that nothing serious nor important can gain their attention. If they read at all, they either amuse themselves with trifles, or poison themselves with trash. Such will, probably, throw away this tract in contempt, if it should fall into their hands. Should it, however, fall into the hands of one more thoughtful, I will endeavour that he shall be repaid for looking it over.

I have been often encouraged, when, from the pulpit, I have met a servant's attentive eye; or when I have seen him listening to a profitable remark while waiting in the parlour. I have been pleased to meet them at a bookseller's, inquiring for some instructive publication; and have been ready to say upon such occasions, 'Happy is the man,' whatever be his station, 'that getteth understanding,' for 'she is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her:' Prov. iii. 13, 18.

'The sluggard is wiser in his own eyes than seven men that can render a reason,' Prov. xxvi. 16; but the man of understanding will think and listen. He will seriously consider the shortness of life, and how stupid and brutish it is to waste it without improvement: much more so to sink it in folly, sensuality, and vice; and instead of making provision for a happy immortality, only lay the ground for bitter repentance.

Thinking persons, I say, cannot but feel the weight of these considerations; and, accordingly, they will listen to such hints as they meet with on the subject, and they will improve as they listen. In this temper and in this way, some of the first characters for usefulness and respectability have arisen from among servants; agreeably to that Scripture, 'A wise servant shall have

rule over a son that causeth shame, and shall have part of the inheritance among the brethren:' Prov. xvii. 2.

Turn your mind, therefore, to such instruction as Providence shall please to afford you, in this or in any other way. It is from a small seed dropped into the ground, that the most useful and ornamental productions of the field and garden arise; and a single hint has given rise to a train of thoughts, which has formed a new character among men.

And here let me add a caution: namely, That you should be careful not to slight any truth, because some weak person may happen to hold it, or some bad character may chance to defend it; or because it may be spoken to you in a wrong temper, or at an improper season. It is possible that these very hints may be put in your hand in a way which tends to lessen their good effect: but recollect, that a guinea is exactly of the same value to you in whatever way it is presented. Regardless of the mind of the giver, you would say, "Gold is gold." Now, I only ask, that you would in the same way, reflect that truth is truth! and that truth will serve you where gold cannot. 'Buy' thou, therefore, 'the truth, and sell it not,' Prov. xxiii. 23; on any account whatever. Stand by it, and it will stand by thee; for it is *great*, and shall *prevail*.

CHAPTER II.

THE SERVANT'S INTEREST.

An all-wise Providence has appointed different stations, and made them dependent on one another; so

that the 'EYE cannot say to the HAND, I have no need of thee:' 1 Cor. xii. 21. It has also made the happiormance of its own particular office; so that the *eye*, ness of each member to depend on the regular perwhile it directs the *hand*, shall, in return, receive protection from it. By this mutual dependence it is intended, 'that there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another:' 1 Cor. xii. 25.

Whatever, therefore, you meet with in this Tract, which treats of what you owe to the happiness of your employers, is by no means to be understood as if the payment would lessen your own stock of happiness. I mean to show, rather, that your interests are mutual: and that what promotes your Master's comfort, as truly increases your own. A fatherly regard to your true interest ought never to be forgotten, either by your Minister or Master: both are bound to remember, that *they* also have a Master in Heaven, who has commanded them 'to love their neighbour as themselves,' Matt. xxii. 39; and to 'give unto their servants that which is just and equal:' Col. iv. 1.

It is *just* and *equal*, then, that faithful service should meet with suitable protection and encouragement. Neither the laws of God nor man forbid your prudently seeking relief under want, excessive labour, or injuries of any kind. You are justified in quitting a place in which you cannot enjoy health, nor obtain reasonable support and comfort. But prudence requires you to be cautious how you change your place, merely for the sake of greater wages. Many a servant has sold health, comfort, and character, yea the safety also of body and soul, for a paltry consideration in money: and learned too late, that one place, with small wages,

is often better, all things considered, than another with large.

Much less let a hasty word or momentary vexation throw you out of place. This is acting more like a passionate child than a man. Whatever you do in a passion, you will repent of doing. It is always *folly*, —often *madness*. "No government," says an able writer, "could subsist for a day, if single errors could justify defection:" and we may add, That such as throw up their posts for an error's sake, will probably spend their lives in smarting for their rashness.

In wishing to change your place, you should recollect that every change will bring with it its own inconveniences and difficulties; and some, of which you have no suspicion till you feel them. It is childish to form high expectations of a new thing. People of experience expect but little from the most flattering prospects and proposals. Sin, like a blight, has entered every place, and withered the most pleasant of its fruits and flowers. If good men, (like Aaron, Eli, and David,) are obliged to lament that their 'house is not so with God,' 2 Sam. xxiii. 5, as they wish and earnestly pray for, what can we expect from the generality of houses?

You should also never forget that we carry the greatest part of the trouble we complain of in our own bosoms. When we wish a change, we, for the most part, are like sick persons, who imagine, that if they could change sides in their bed they should be easier: they turn, but they are still uneasy: and why? because they are still sick. This life was never intended to be the rest of either master or servant: both have their burdens; and the master's is oftentimes the heavier of the two.

The dutiful and pious conduct of some servants to-

ward their indigent relations should not be forgotten. I have seen a daughter willing to wear mean clothes, that her aged mother might have some to wear. I have also seen such conduct blessed with distinguished favour. 'Honour,' therefore, 'thy father and thy mother, which is the first commandment with promise, that it may be well with thee:' Eph. vi. 2, 3.

As reputation in general is that which gives weight and influence to any man, so the reputation of servants is peculiarly *their* strength. A servant with health and character is provided for. 'A good name is better than precious ointment:' Eccl. vii. 1. A silent steadiness, a tried integrity and diligence, are so essential to the interests of mankind, that no master can be insensible to their value. Be assured, that the wealthiest and the happiest are so needy, in this respect, that such service must always bear a high price.

Let nothing, therefore, base or false, rob you of that precious jewel, your reputation. Be honest, diligent, and civil, if it be only out of respect to yourself. Who is not struck with the answer of that slave which history records, who, standing among others for sale, and being asked by a purchaser, "Wilt thou be faithful, if I buy thee?" replied, "Yes, whether you buy me or not!"

But character, especially among females, (to whom I now speak) is easily blasted, so as to be irrecoverably lost. If any consideration can lessen the crime of the villain who attempts to strip you of it, it must be that of his not considering the depth of ruin into which he would plunge you. Should he, however, be cruel enough to neglect the consideration, surely you will not forget, that want of reputation, and the despair which attends it, fill our streets with prostitutes; murdering, at once, both body and soul. Depend upon it, that he,

who would dishonour you, has no sincere affection for you; and the moment you suffer him to pass the bounds of the strictest decorum, he must lose even his *respect* for you; that very respect, upon which alone a true and constant regard is built.

Your safety partly consists in being aware of your danger. Detect Ruin in its first approaches. Understand its smiling aspect and plausible pretence. Particularly avoid dangerous occasions, and whatever you find likely to deprive you of your resolution. They have made but little observation on their own hearts, who have not learned how weak their reason and resolution are, in the moment of temptation: and, therefore, that their safety lies in making a *timely* escape; that is to say, an *immediate* one.

To speak more generally—Bad company is so mischievous, that when a young servant is observed to be entering into it, every person of compassion and discernment recoils at the sight, as at seeing a sheep enter the slaughter-house. Who, that has seen any thing of life, does not know the mischief of a vicious conversation and example? What will not an unprincipled tongue dare to assert? What so sacred that does not serve it for a jest? What character or service will it not teach others to despise? What corrupt maxim or vain project will it not recommend? I have known a short conversation quite unhinge a sober mind. I have observed a few hints plant disorder and wretchedness in a once contented breast, that could never afterward be rooted out. I have even been surprised to find how soon a bad example would transform one that has been long humble, diligent, and conscientious, into the very reverse. In a word, such a tongue is, indeed, 'an unruly evil,' and 'full of deadly poison,' James iii. 8; and the danger is the greater, because the poison is often mixed

with something curious and entertaining, or is presented under the notion of friendship. The venom, thus sweetened, creeps into the heart before even its danger is suspected: but beware of this deadly cup as you prize your safety: the more pleasing you find it, the more dangerous it is. The best advice here is, that which comes from the highest authority: 'Avoid it: pass not by it: turn from it, and pass away:' Prov. iv. 15.

I think I ought not to omit warning you of the snare which attends *gaming*, or adventuring in lotteries. Covetousness lies at the root of it; and a discontent with that provision, which God hath already made for us. It is He, who has placed us in our different stations, and bids each to 'take heed and beware of covetousness,' Luke xii. 15, and to depend for our support upon him who clothes the lilies and feeds the birds: and far from encouraging a man in those crooked paths which lead to wasting, and sometimes to stealing, he charges him to 'labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give' (even though he is but a labourer) 'to him that needeth:' Eph. iv. 28.

Many honest and prosperous servants, led away by the puffing proposals of gain which are every where to be met with, would think a real friend was romancing, if he should give them an account of the distresses, frauds, lies, and other desperate steps to which such projects often lead; and which sometimes end, not only in the loss of character, but even of life. Such an account, I say, might surprise those who know but little of the world, and the effect of its gilded baits; but is this account anything more than what has actually happened again and again? And, if we often *hear* of such things, how many more evils of this sort may we

reasonably suppose there are of which we never hear! But it is with *gaming*, as with most other bad habits: it advances a step at a time. The first step is thought to be innocent and safe: the next is not considered as very dangerous: the third, however dangerous, is yet deemed, in present circumstances, absolutely necessary: till, at length, the deluded adventurer awakes, as from a dream, to reflect (but too late) upon his folly and his ruin.

If I have said nothing of *swearing*, *drunkenness*, *indecency*, *violence*, &c. it is merely because such vices are too gross and scandalous to need exposing in such a Tract as this. Who, that commits these crimes, does not, upon reflection, feel ashamed of them? There are, however, some considerations at the end of the book, to which such an unhappy character would do well to take heed, before it is too late: for 'he, that being often reproved, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed! and that, without remedy:' Prov. xxix. 1.

I AM obliged now to turn from considerations which more particularly relate to your private concerns, to those which belong to your engagement.

But, before we enter upon the next chapter, let us seriously resolve to seek His blessing upon these Hints, "from whom," as our Church expresses it, "all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works do proceed"—"that we, who cannot do anything that is good without him, may by him be enabled to live according to his will, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

CHAPTER III.

A MASTER'S REASONABLE EXPECTATIONS.

He, who foresaw the infinite variety of disputable cases which would arise, and which no body of laws, however extensive, could reach, when "he visited us in great humility," left a rule so comprehensive, that it may be applied to every case; and at the same time so easy, that the meanest capacity may apply it:

All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them; for this is the law and the prophets: Matt. vii. 12.

As our claim upon others depends so much upon our 'rendering to all their dues,' Rom. xiii. 7,—as 'tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear,' and 'honour to whom honour'—it is my duty to state to you some of those services, which those with whom you live have a right to claim.

And, as the first step to our rightly performing our part, is, to *know* it, I shall select the rule above mentioned as our *measuring rod.* I shall put this standard into your own hand; and observe that, in order to your using it, you have only to suppose that Providence had appointed you to *govern* instead of to serve: you will then perceive what you would reasonably have claimed from those servants over whom you were placed.

Would you not expect, while you fulfilled your engagements with them, that they should also fulfil their engagements with you; namely, to yield you both faithful and *cheerful* service? bearing with those infir-

mities in you which are common to human nature? Would you not expect them to be honest, not only in larger matters, but that they should not watch opportunities to purloin in *smaller?* Would you deem it upright, if they listened to your *private conversation?* if they examined your *private papers?* if they wasted or made away with your substance, or your *time?* In a word, would you not say, "Real honesty will do nothing which fears a discovery; or which needs secret opportunities, or concealments?"

For a master as much pays his servant for *time* and *care*, as his tradesman for goods; and, while his property is liable to be attacked in a variety of ways, he employs servants, like so many watchmen, to defend it. But how hard would you deem it to be betrayed by your guards! to have the very staff upon which you leaned, not only fail, but pierce you! to have a servant idle, when you particularly needed his activity; and wasting that, which is often provided with difficulty! How would you feel his carelessness, when much depended on his care! and, if he were at the same time too proud and impatient to receive either reproof or instruction! With what grief would you observe him choosing the very connections which you had forbidden! forming a separate interest, yea, a sort of conspiracy against you and your family, and seeking wretched pretences to justify absolute injuries! I cannot doubt but that you would propose your rule, as an end to all debate. You would bid him honestly ask his own heart, how *he* would like such treatment!

The same may be said of the abuse of horses: not to mention the baseness of ill-treating a generous creature, which cannot complain; and which, while it stands patient under repeated injuries, stands also ready to strain every nerve to please his cruel abuser. How

would you feel if *your* servant thus treated a horse which you valued? Let such an abuser also ask himself, How *he* would feel to live constantly under the lash of an unfeeling tyrant, who either has no meaning in his abuse, or who takes no pains to make his meaning understood? under one, who may have any thing done by gentle methods, but who makes choice of cruel ones? and one, who, by repeating his cruelties, has so hardened himself, that it becomes difficult to convince him that he is cruel?

Again: Would you not expect, while your property was secured, and your interest consulted in other respects, that the character of yourself and your family should be equally secure? Apply the rule again, and inquire, What *you* would think of a servant who scrupled not to expose your weakness to any one who would be mean enough to hear the tale. What would you say to those, who collected and retailed every fault or misfortune in your family; especially, when misstated, and presented only on the unfavourable side? I am persuaded that their taking away your purse would not leave so unfavourable an impression upon your mind.

I have said nothing here of inventing absolute falsehoods, because I am not speaking to the abandoned, but to the *inconsiderate:* to such as do not consider that to speak only half the truth is often a lie; and that the truth itself may be so injurious, that nothing can justify its being spoken, but when greater injuries must follow upon your silence.

Once more: You would not only require your servant to be honest, sober, and careful of your property, interest, and character; but you would reasonably expect attention as to the *manner* of your being served. You must be conscious how much satisfaction depends upon the spirit and temper of the person serving, and

how very offensively a command may be obeyed: insomuch, that obedience in the *act* may be accompanied with perfect rebellion in the *manner*. You know, if *you* receive assistance in a sullen, careless, or impertinent way, you would rather be without such service. You must also be sensible, that if every trifle be made a subject of debate or contention, no family can be at peace. Providence has appointed some to govern, and others to serve, as different members of the same body: and when this order is not cheerfully submitted to, there must ensue strife, confusion, and every evil work.

Thus I have mentioned some instances as examples of trying the rule or standard of right; but innumerable instances besides these might be mentioned, and will daily arise, to which the rule is equally applicable. If, therefore, vicious companions attempt to make wrong appear right, or to think very little of the wrong, recollect you have a rule at hand which will exactly suit the case, and easily determine what is your duty; for no wrong conduct in others can possibly excuse what is wrong in us.

A considerate master will not, indeed, rigorously exact his claims: he will know human nature too well to expect more than imperfect service from imperfect creatures. The errors which he marks in his own course, the passions which disturb his own bosom, and the 'ten thousand talents' which he hereby owes to his Lord, will teach him to avoid so great a mistake as that of angrily 'taking his servant by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest!' Matt. xviii. 28. But the more generously he refrains from *demanding* all his due, the more ready should you be to *pay* it: yea, with a generosity like his own, exact it from yourself; and, depend upon it, that if you possess such real worth,

sooner or later your worth will be felt and acknowledged, however low your present situation or discouraging your prospects.

CHAPTER IV.

FELLOW-SERVANTS.

I COME in this chapter to drop a few hints respecting the temper you should cultivate toward your *Fellow-Servants:* and your living well with them, depends much upon the regard you pay to the same general rule, of *doing as you would be done by.*

The jealousies and animosities, which arise from the merest trifle, and throw a large family into confusion and party rage, are scarcely to be conceived by those who have not seen them: like a single spark, which, struck by accident, and falling upon combustible matter, will lay a whole town in ashes. In order, therefore, to live in peace, you must not only be peaceably disposed, but, as the Apostle expresses it, you must 'seek peace and pursue it:' 1 Pet. iii. 11. That is, as men pursue an object upon which their heart is set. Often have we heard complaints stated with plausibility by one party; and thought the injury very great, till the other side was heard. If, therefore, you suppose (which is very common) that the grievance lies chiefly, if not entirely, with your fellow-servant, put yourself in his place; and you will, perhaps, begin to discover your mistake.

Let me particularly exhort you to make an ingenuous confession of error as soon as you discover it. Never think you degrade yourself by taking the side of

Truth, whenever or with whomsoever it appears. You never pretended to be infallible: why then be so backward to acknowledge an error? To convince my adversary, is gaining a victory over *him:* but, to confess my mistake, is to gain one over *myself.* In a word, it is often the only method left us of doing away a fault: it is the way to rise by a fall: it is an opportunity of seizing the approbation of another's mind: it silences his future blame, and often overcomes evil with good.

History mentions an exemplary character, who went to his enemy, and said, "Shall we never be reconciled till we become a table-talk to all the country?" And, when his enemy agreed to reconciliation, "Remember," said he, "that though I was both elder and the superior, I sought first to thee!" "True," replied the other, "I every way feel my inferiority; for I began the quarrel, and thou the reconciliation."

One of the worst characters that enters a house is 'the whisperer, which separateth chief friends:' Prov. xvi. 28. But, I pray you, understand me here. By a whisperer, I cannot mean one, who feels himself bound to give notice of wrongs which he cannot otherwise prevent. No! I mean a wanton or malicious sower of strife. I hope you will consider the injustice and cruelty of such a practice: and recollect, that no one despises the tale-bearer, more than those who listen to the tale; and that 'with what measure ye mete, it will,' in one way or other, 'be measured to you again:' Matt. vii. 2.

In a word, whether we regard masters or servants, we live in a world which has so many sharp points and critical stations, that our own comfort, as well as that of those with whom we live, is made to turn upon mutual kindness, forbearance, accommodation, and dependence: in want of these, we are condemned to bear the lash of

continual discord, and are made our own tormentors. The least consideration will inform us how easy it is to put an ill-natured construction upon a word: and what perverse turns and expressions spring from an evil temper. Nothing can be explained to him who will not understand, nor will any thing appear right to the unreasonable. "Every thing in life," says one of the ancients, "has two handles;" but it must be a bad disposition indeed, which will be ever seizing the wrong one.

I therefore repeat it, That if you would *have* comfort, you must *give* it. It is no uncommon thing to hear the very persons, who throw a family into confusion, complain that there is no peace in the family: but he, that would escape the calamity of fire, must be careful not to strike the sparks which enkindle it.

The only remedy for all these evils is true religion. This, so far as it is embraced, brings 'glory to God, peace on earth, and good-will toward men:' Luke ii. 14. The slightest acquaintance with the doctrine and example of our Saviour, must convince every unprejudiced mind of their holy and heavenly tendency: and the *tendency* of this religion is a sufficient proof that it came from Heaven, and leads to it again; if no other proof could be given.

'From whence come wars and fightings among us,' but from the want of that mind which our Master possessed and recommended? Such a mind would put an end to those bickerings and jealousies, which render families so wretched. Christianity teaches us to suffer ills, not to inflict them; and to give 'good measure and running over,' rather than nicely to consider what was *agreed* for.

But, whatever price we pay for peace, it must never be purchased at the expense of *Truth*. The quiet of some persons is little more than a state of confederacy,

or agreement in wrong sentiments and bad practices. As it is my duty to warn you of whatever is wrong in general, let me add, that there is nothing wrong in the character of man, which a serious reader of his Bible will not find described, together with its danger and remedy.

Let me also remind you to value and improve your *time;* for, as somebody has observed, "It is with our time as with our money, a good husband makes a little go a great way!" Spare minutes taken care of, turn to great account at the year's end! Waste not then the leisure you have (especially on the Sunday) in so wretched and unprofitable a manner as many do; but gather up your fragments of time for present improvement and eternal happiness; and endeavour, in improving opportunities, to imitate a great character of former times, who, when almost expiring, hearing some persons discoursing in a low tone of voice, said, "Speak out, that I may learn something more before I die."

CHAPTER V.

RELIGION.

I HAVE hitherto spoken principally on those subjects which relate to your comfort and character in this world. I should, however, perform but a small part of my duty, and but ill fulfil the profession of a friend, were I to confine my advice only to the present moment. To give a man directions for travelling *comfortably* is worth something; but how insufficient will this be, if we neglect to point out the *right road* in which he is o travel! Even a rough and dreary way, which leads

to our Father's house, is far better than a smooth and pleasant path, which leads to the abode of an enemy.

I come, therefore, to speak on the subject of that Religion which I mentioned at the conclusion of the last chapter; and which is no other than a state of friendship with God: which raises a high and lively expectation in our hearts on the security of his own truth: which brings present *life and peace*, Rom. viii. 6; and, like a river, refreshes and fertilizes every place through which it flows.

Religion, moreover, particularly invites your regard, as it is a blessing common to the rich and poor. "It is at church that the poor man lifts up his head." Providence has appointed many distinctions in other things, all which a Christian is satisfied with on this very account, that as they are but transient in themselves, so they are appointed of God for wise purposes; but, in the grand and eternal concern, you have the same privileges and promises which are proposed to your master. For, as the natural Sun shines into the room of the meanest servant with the same splendour and warmth as into the master's, so the 'Sun of Righteousness' ariseth, without any respect of persons, upon their hearts.

Lest, however, you should fall into the more common mistakes about our religion; or lest you should be led away by any dangerous heresy of the day, and make shipwreck of that faith for which our reformers so earnestly strove and so willingly bled: I entreat your attention while I discourse further on a subject, which, in its importance, infinitely exceeds every other: 'For the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal:' 2 Cor. iv. 18.

Christianity, then, is more than a reputable *profession*, a just *notion*, or a regular *form*, however valuable

these may be in themselves: to mistake it for these, is like mistaking an image for a man, or the *shadow* of any thing for the thing itself. It is more than an *outward reformation:* for this is but lopping off the branches of a bad tree, while the root remains to shoot afresh.

It is also more than 'doing our duty toward one another:' for to stop here, would be like regarding your fellow-servants while you forgot your Master. Yea, we shall fall short of our mark, if we only regard what we are to 'do for our great MASTER himself:' since the Gospel principally discovers what 'he hath done' for us: and this discovery is declared to be of such importance, that our eternal state depends upon the regard we pay to it: Mark xvi. 15, 16. If, indeed, our religion were not more than some moralists teach, the figurative atonements made before Christ came, and the *real* one made by him on the cross, would not only be an immense, but unnecessary expense; and the promise of a *Divine Spirit* and a *new heart*, Ezek. xxxvi. 26, unaccountable. On the other hand, the cross of Christ, and the promise of his Spirit, point out the depth of that misery into which sin has plunged us. They show, that 'without shedding of blood' there 'is no remission,' Heb. ix. 22: and that, without such a repentance or change of mind takes place in the sinner, as may be compared to his being 'born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God:' John iii. 3.

To speak as plainly as I can on such a subject, Christianity sets forth the benefits which fallen creatures derive from a Redeemer, who is no less than 'God manifest in the flesh,' 1 Tim. iii. 16; and these benefits consist in that which he wrought FOR them, and that which he works IN them. At the same time it discov-

ers, that 'without him, they can do nothing' for themselves: John xv. 5.

'Who,' in this respect, 'hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?' For us, if indeed we are his disciples, he 'grew up as a tender plant:' for us, 'he was despised and rejected of men:' and after speaking to our case as man never spake, and performing such wonders as man never wrought, 'our iniquity was laid upon him,' and 'he was brought as a lamb to the slaughter.' There, 'for us men, and for our salvation, it pleased the Lord to bruise him, and to make his soul an offering for sin:' Isa. liii. 1—10. 'For us,' also, 'he gave himself,' Titus ii. 14; and 'bare our sins in his own body on the tree,' 1 Pet. ii. 24; 'the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God,' iii. 18; and, having *died* for us, for us also he *rose*, 'leading Captivity captive, and receiving gifts for men:' Eph. iv. 8. But it was not only *for us* that he did this: he also sends these purchased gifts *into* our hearts. It is *in us* that he sets up his 'kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost:' Rom. xiv. 17. It is *in us* that he works repentance, faith, hope, and love: and all those genuine 'fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God:' Phil. i. 11. This is that 'life of God in the soul of man,' which is the earnest and foretaste of life eternal: and this our Lord has taught us to expect, that we shall as really and actually derive from himself, and receive *into* our hearts, as the *branch* really and actually receives life, sap, or nourishment from the *vine*, to which it is united: John xv. 4.

As he sat on the well, discoursing with a woman of Samaria, he taught the same truth by another figure, when he said, 'If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me drink, thou would-

est have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water. Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life:' John iv. 10, 13, 14. Accordingly, in the great day of the feast, Jesus stood, and again proclaimed his best gift; and promised to every thirsty soul a spring of divine and eternal life, derived indeed from himself, but to spring up in the heart of the believer: and, lest his meaning should not be comprehended by every one, the Evangelist adds, 'This spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him shall receive:' John vii. 37—39.

Thus securing us from all we *fear*, and supplying us with all we *need*, he becomes completely our SAVIOUR.

Let me further hint, that, by attending to these principles, you will be enabled to detect the more plausible errors which you meet with. Examine, when a doctrine is presented, whether it does not tend to oppose, or *to explain away* one or other of these two branches of Christianity: either what Christ does *for* the sinner, by the merit of his blood; or what he does *in* the sinner, by the power of his Spirit.

I cannot, indeed, in a few words, convey a more plain and scriptural account of these truths, than in the following short extract from the Articles of the Church of England, which maintain, That "there is a fault and corruption in the nature of every man that naturally is engendered of the offspring of *Adam:* whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil." Art. ix. It is further declared, that, "the condition of man, after the fall of *Adam*, is such, that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by

own natural strength and good works, to faith and calling upon God; having no power to do good works pleasant and acceptable to God, without his grace." Art. x. Do you ask, "Upon what foundation can we now stand before God?" The answer is, Upon that only which he himself hath laid; for 'we are accounted righteous before God only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by faith; and not for our own works and deservings.' Art. xi. Do you further ask, "Of what value then are these works of ours, since they cannot justify us before God?" The Church well replies, "Albeit, that good works, which are the fruits of faith, and follow after justification, cannot put away our sins, and endure the severity of God's judgment; yet are they pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ; and do spring out necessarily of a true and lively Faith; insomuch, that by them a lively faith may be as evidently known as a tree discerned by the fruit." Art. xii.

If this be Christianity, let the reader stop and inquire what he knows of it. Let him seriously reflect on the course of his life; on his views and his hopes: that is, let him honestly examine his heart, and consider whether he has not been hitherto wandering far from the ways and counsel of God. Undone, as we must be, till we find out our condition as transgressors of a holy law, and discover a hope of mercy, 'through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus,' yet with what unconcern are these great points treated? Though we naturally wander like lost sheep, who among us has actually returned to 'the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls?' And yet, strange to say, who does not expect to be considered as a Christian? 'Lord, what is man, that thou shouldest be thus mindful of him?'—and, What is man, that he should be so unmindful of thee and of himself?

For full satisfaction on these and less important points

in religion, search the Scriptures. It is our Lord's own direction, John v. 39; and it is recorded, to the honour of some people at Berea, that they were 'more noble' than those in Thessalonica, not only in 'that they received the word with all readiness of mind;' but that, instead of listening to senseless prejudice and rash opposition, like their neighbours, 'they searched the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so:' Acts xvii. 11. Let me entreat you to imitate the nobler mind of this ingenuous people, especially as your Bible contains not only these leading truths, but a variety of examples, directions, and encouragements, connected with them. It not only leads, but animates: it not only discovers, but supports; and, therefore, is to be the constant 'lamp to your feet, and light to your paths,' Ps. cxix. 105—the staff upon which you are to lean every step of your way.

My design in mentioning these truths, is to remind the members of our Church of their principles; to place the feet of the inexperienced in the ancient track, and to put them upon their guard. For want of caution, and some assistance at first setting out, well-meaning people have been miserably perplexed and discouraged in their course, or drawn aside by seducers: for, 'while men slept, the enemy came and sowed tares:' Matt. xiii. 25.

CHAPTER VI.

PREJUDICES.

From what has been stated, it plainly appears that Religion is a lively tree, bearing heavenly fruits; 'the planting of the Lord, in which he will be glorified:'

Isa. lxi. 3: his noblest and most expensive work. It is no wonder, then, that the great adversary of God and man should be ever raising prejudices against it: not indeed against the *form*, but against the *power* of godliness. Among other objections which I have not room to mention, none is more common than that which represents serious religion as the death of *happiness* and the grave of *business;* and of this, you will not fail to have certain instances pointed out as proofs.

But those instances are impositions. They are not the effects of true religion, but of the reverse: 'for the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance:' Gal. v. 22, 23. Are these terms for wretchedness? or, are these fruits likely to produce it?

A penitent, indeed, like the *jailor*, may, upon being awakened to a sense of his danger, express this sense with terror, and anxiously cry out, 'What must I do to be saved?' Acts xvi. 30. And a backslider, like *Peter*, cut to the heart with a sense of his ingratitude, may, for a while, seek a retreat where he may go aside to *weep bitterly*. There is a season of correction, *a time to mourn*, Eccl. iii. 4, which, like a dark cloud to the husbandman, is generally followed by a fruitful season. What wisdom would there have been in any of us, if we had never known sorrow? but, though such a 'weeping endureth for a night, joy cometh in the morning:' Ps. xxx. 5. A true, solid, abiding satisfaction! liable, indeed, like every thing below, to interruptions; but such as a man feels upon the recovery of his health, through a salutary though painful course of medicine. No one ever deemed such an one *unhappy*, because he underwent some pain in order to a sound cure.

A Christian of a peevish or melancholy turn may be found; but, like a tree without its proper fruit, though

he may be alive, he is not well. We are not allowed to call him a *dead* or *bad* tree, because he does not flourish for the present season; but, for the same reason, we cannot say he is a healthy one; or, in another view, such a Christian is yet a *child*, and therefore imperfect in measure: he is also at school, and has not thoroughly learned his lesson.

True religion is the life, health, and education of the soul; and whoever truly possesses it, is strengthened with peculiar encouragement for every good word and work. Surely, if any thing can warm and animate the heart of man, and enable him to bear up under difficulties, it must be an assurance that 'the eternal God is his refuge,' and that 'the everlasting arms are underneath him,' Deut. xxxiii. 27: that 'all things shall work together for his good,' Rom. vii. 28: and that his 'light affliction, which is but for a moment, shall work for him a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory:' 2 Cor. iv. 17.

Admitting that other men have their hopes and joys, can they be compared with these? 'Their' comforts depend upon their 'corn, and wine' and 'oil increasing:' but a believer can say, 'Though the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines, and the labour of the olive shall fail; yet I will rejoice in the Lord: I will joy in the God of my salvation:' Hab. iii. 17, 18.

I entreat you, therefore, henceforward to consider religion as the true spring of solid happiness; it consistently bids its disciples to *rejoice alway*, Phil. iv. 4: because it affords them matter for rejoicing under the loss of all things; "in the hour of death, and in the day of judgment!"

As to the article of *business*, for what is not a religious man prepared, to which he can be called? The

of God fits him to be entrusted; the *favour* of God raises and animates his expectations: the *promise* of God supports him under difficulties: the *word* of God gives general direction to his steps; and the *blessing* of God attends them. You shall, however, not take my word for this: you shall see the fact.

Compare any irreligious servant with that servant of *Abraham* whose character is recorded in Gen. xxiv. What a holy acquaintance had this man formed with his God! what reliance on his providence! what fidelity to his master! what diligence! what real dignity of character, though in service! 'He ruled over all that Abraham had,' but forgot not that he was still Abraham's servant. Entrusted with a business of the last importance, he conducted it as his own: or, as the Apostle speaks, 'with singleness of heart, as unto the Lord:' Eph. vi. 5. As he approached the place of his business, 'he made the camels to kneel down without the city, by a well of water;' and knowing from whom all our help cometh, he said, 'O Lord God of my master Abraham, I pray thee send me good speed this day, and show kindness unto my master.' On observing signs of success in answer to his prayer, he blesses the God of his master; and, on his business being successfully concluded, he again 'worships the Lord;'—transacting his concerns more with God than with man, and mixing prayer with praise in every stage of it.

Nor suppose that he was less diligent because he was so devout: 'fervent in spirit,' he was not 'slothful in business:' Rom. xii. 11. An idle enthusiast may disgrace religion, and a real Christian may have his faults: but religion itself is the friend of business. It directs it: it transacts it honourably: it generally secures success to it. Doing business with diligence and truth appears to have been a part of this man's religion. He,

and the men that were with him, 'tarried that night; and they arose up in the morning, and he said, Send me away unto my master.' And when the brother and the mother of the damsel, whom he had sought in marriage for his master's son, would have detained him a few days, 'he said unto them, Hinder me not, seeing the Lord hath prospered my way. Send me away, that I may go to my master.'

Now compare, as I said, the wisdom and worth of this servant of God, with the folly and falsehood of such a slave to gold as Gehazi, 2 Kings, v., and you will perceive, that, when Christ said, 'Take my yoke,' Matt. xi. 29, or enter into my service, he showed us the only way to freedom, usefulness, happiness, or rest.

Great excellence, indeed, in any station, has always been rare; nor should the characters whom I am about to mention, merely as *models* for imitation, be made standards to measure others by, or become occasions of discouragement to any. Such comparisons would be odious. Many, who are truly sincere as Christians, and valuable as servants, fall short of others in certain respects. Our Lord calls that ground *good*, which brought forth but *thirty;* though other ground produced *sixty* and a *hundred* fold: Matt. xiii. 23. Yet excellence is not confined to any age; and servants, like Abraham's, may be found even in this.

Some years ago I became acquainted with a servant, whom I shall call Lucius: one, who, knowing the human heart in its deceitfulness and depravity, Jer. xvii. 9, stood indeed before his God, like the publican 'smiting upon his breast;' but, before his Master, he stood with an integrity and diligence, which his master had long observed, and which at length gained his entire confidence. Lord ****** thought and talked of Christianity like many more who have it yet to learn; but he was

constrained to admire its effects in his servant Lucius. He saw in him evident marks of the fear of God; of the consolations of the gospel; of the truth which it enjoins, and the devotion which it inspires: but, while he beheld all this as a singular matter of fact, maintained and exercised in a house like his, he was equally struck in observing, that Lucius was one of the most humble and attentive of his domestics, and no less eminent as a servant than as a saint. The unbelieving Lord (for who can change the heart but God only?) continued, while he lived, to advance and vindicate the Christian servant: and, dying, bequeathed a solid testimony to his virtue.

Them that honour God he will honour: 1 Sam. ii. 30. And he will send the honour by what hand he pleases.

To Lucius, the servants also looked as to a common friend or brother: he instructed them: he assisted them: he reconciled them: he was their example; and, if there were any more foolish and profligate than the rest, he had the honour of their reproach. I need only to add, that I mention this fact, as well as the former, to show how honourable a part such servants sustain in society; to show that true religion is the same in every age; to exhibit the fruits of genuine Christianity, wherever it is found; and to encourage servants to higher aims than they usually entertain.

CHAPTER VII.

PIETY ENCOURAGED.

As those, who have been awakened to a serious regard for their salvation are likely to be among the first who take up such a Tract as this, their character ought to be particularly remembered in it; for their dangers, as well as their privileges, are peculiar: throughout this chapter, therefore, I speak to such only.

And let me affectionately entreat you, my Christian Friends, 'to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called, with all lowliness and meekness:' Eph. iv. 1, 2. While you are the servants of God, be careful never to forget that he has appointed you to be also the servants of *man*. One duty should never be opposed to another duty. Our religion teaches us to adorn our station: not to forget it. Beware, therefore, of the error of those, who, upon taking up a religious profession, have become conceited, forward, and unmindful of that order and decorum which God has appointed for the well-being of society.

Instead of disgusting your master by such a conduct, endeavour, by every lawful means, but by no other whatever, to secure a place in his esteem, as well as in his house; and, in order to this, let your diligence be as his right hand, and your care as his right eye. Study his temper and his interest, and your own will be studied at the same time.

'A certain centurion's servant, who was dear to him, was sick, and ready to die. And when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto him the elders of the Jews, beseeching him to come and heal his servant:' Luke vii. 2, 3.

You may here remark, how dear a servant may render himself to his employer; and how God causes one good office to be repaid by another.

But I will come nearer home. Lydia is the servant of a small family, whose mistress I lately visited after a long illness. "Sir," said she, "the girl who has just left the room, is a greater comfort to me than I can express. She watches me with the affection of a daughter, and the care of a nurse. When my complaints make me peevish, she contrives something to sooth me. I often observe her taking pains to discover what would add to my comfort; and often am presented with the thing I wish for, before I express it in words. I live without suspicion: for I perceive her to be conscientious, even to scrupulosity. My chief complaint is, that she takes so much care of me, that I cannot make her take sufficient care of herself."

"I have observed," said I, "her attention at church, as well as when waiting upon you."

"My servant," continued she, "is a Christian; and, in my late distress, afforded me her prayers as well as her tears. Her parents were too poor to give her any education; but she has taught herself to read, and frequently reads the Scriptures to me. Now and then, while she is reading, her heart is too full to be quite silent on the passage; and then she drops an expression or two, accompanied with such simplicity and meaning, as to bring to my mind those words, 'I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes:' Luke x. 21. In short, I esteem her one of the most valuable gifts I ever received from an indulgent Providence; and never could have supposed that so much of my comfort depended on the faithfulness and care of a poor servant."

After saying some things to encourage this worthy girl, as I passed her in going away, I could not help saying also to myself, "How much better do these retired virtues deserve recording than those splendid mischiefs which historians call up all their eloquence to adorn!"

But, to return. Are you in prosperous circumstances? Be careful, lest you forget Him who placed you in them, and lest you abuse these advantages to the dishonour of your best Friend. Often recollect, that you keep your present station during his pleasure: and consider, with pious Nehemiah, that every heart is in his hand, and every gift at his disposal.

And here, by the way, is another instance of a man, who found that earthly business is never so well conducted, as by heavenly wisdom. He had a most arduous undertaking before him; but, with God for his helper, he despaired not of success. He requested his master that he might be permitted to pursue his undertaking; but secretly looked to God alone for the answer which he was to receive. While he presented wine to the king, he worshipped a greater King!—even one, who, he knew, 'turns the hearts of kings as the rivers of water:' Prov. xxi. 1. Bitter enemies opposed him; but a man like Nehemiah always knows what to do with his enemies: he puts them into God's hand, while he walks wisely and uprightly before them. Admirable was his conduct, when he found some (whom they might call of his own sect) acting amiss. With a holy indignation he testified against their abuses, though they were engaged with him in the same general design: he expected no success but in the way of righteousness; and, in this way, he found it.

Let us thank God that he hath given such examples

as these for every station in life; and then let us beg for grace to imitate them.

Should your present station be discouraging, trust God and act uprightly, and you shall succeed at length even beyond your expectations. I may encourage every pious servant, as ELISHA did the young man that served him: 'Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them:' 2 Kings vi. 16. It was in a patient, faithful service, under hard treatment, that Jacob found a friend to plead his cause, which his master could not but notice: 'I have learned,' said Laban, 'by experience, that the Lord hath blessed me for thy sake:' Gen. xxx. 27. The blessing of *Abraham* was the portion of *Jacob*, and, we are assured, shall be equally the portion of every Christian, to the end of time; for 'if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise:' Gal. iii. 29.

Read what a train of difficulties Joseph had to encounter. Hated by his brethren,—falsely accused by his mistress,—and imprisoned for his integrity, still, like 'the moon walking in brightness,' he continued to shine through a disastrous night: securely relying on him 'who cannot lie;' and who promises to make 'all things work together for good, to them that love him:' Rom. viii. 28.

Affliction is a school in which a good man learns not only to be wise; but, in the end, to be thankful. I have somewhere read of a poor servant or slave, who, under great severity, had fled from the worst of masters to the best. I mean he had sought rest in the bosom of Jesus Christ, the common Friend of the weary and heavy laden. This man was so impressed with a sense of the benefits which he had derived from his afflictions, that, lying on his death-bed, and seeing his mas-

ter standing by, he eagerly caught the hands of his oppressor, and kissing them, said, "These hands have brought me to Heaven."

In dark and perplexing cases, study the histories of Jacob, Joseph, Nehemiah, Daniel, and other eminent characters who lived in difficult services; and learn from them to trust, where you cannot trace, the designs of Providence. If at any time you are discouraged in your endeavours to please man, look to God; he will accept the feeblest service done for his sake: he is easy to be pleased, though man is not. He rends the rocks, but will not 'break a bruised reed:' Isa. xlii. 3. He inhabits eternity, and he dwells also in 'the humble and contrite heart:' Isa. lvii. 15.

A Christian servant considers his work as appointed of God, though delivered to him by the hand of man: he is, therefore, found serving God in his worldly service; performing it, not only as in his sight, but also as his *will*. And this softens his yoke, and removes the mistake of his service being a meanness or a drudgery: since he knows that it is both the honour and the joy of angels to do their Lord's will; whether it be to crush an immense army, like Sennacherib's, 2 Kings xix. 35, or to wait upon a poor prisoner, like Peter: Acts xii. 7.

One of the wisest of the ancient philosophers (who nevertheless lived and died in service) observes, That "here, as in a theatre, every one of us has his proper part allotted to him: nor should we regard who is appointed to act the prince, or who the beggar; who the master, or who the servant; but who shall perform his own part best." And a wiser than he exhorts, 'Art thou called being a servant! Care not for it:' that is, it is a small and momentary consideration to one who has such views and hopes as a Christian: 'for he, that

is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman:' 1 Cor. vii. 21, 22.

It is also such a servant's comfort to know, that, whatever part or service he is appointed to perform, and whatever present discouragements he meets, his 'labour shall not be in vain in the Lord:' 1 Cor. xv. 58. He is a master who may *raise* vast expectations in the hearts of his servants, but he cannot *disappoint* the least. The dying reflection of a servant of one of our English kings is full of instruction to us all in this respect. Stript in his old age of that honour and wealth to which he had been raised, and to which few subjects ever attained, he justly exclaimed, "Had I but served my God as faithfully as I have served my master, he would not have forsaken me in my grey hairs."

CHAPTER VIII.

DISCRETION.

SHOULD it be your lot to dwell where disorder and profaneness prevail, and where your serious views and conscientious regard to God and his word may be scorned, be in nothing 'terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition; but to you of salvation, and that of God: for to you it is given in behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake:' Phil. i. 28, 29.

Endeavour also to derive instruction even from such scenes as these: for every place is a school to the wise. Observe how every thing proves the value of religion. See how man sinks into ruin and wretchedness as he forsakes his God. Observe in what a variety of ways the corruption of nature breaks out, particularly in the

tongue; 'that world of iniquity:' James iii. 6. Mark how vile a slavery sin is; and how degraded a character every man becomes, who lives under its dominion: forgetting God, like the prodigal, he forgets himself; and wanders on, committing outrages against every thing sacred and serious. Observe also, that these very outrages, like the ravings of a poor lunatic against his friends and his remedies, not only show the pitiable condition in which he lies; but may serve also to remind you of the value of that relief and cure which the Gospel affords; a remedy, which the unhappy scoffer so much despises, and so much needs: *you* know that it would bring him back to a Father: *you* feel that it would bring him to himself. Need I add here, that such a wretched state of things is a constant occasion of gratitude to a Christian for his own deliverance; and should teach him continually to cry, "'What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits?' Ps. cxvi. 12; and how shall I best recommend these benefits to others?"

On this subject permit me to drop a few hints.

In whatever circumstances you live, endeavour to do all the good you can, with the least harm: and, to this end, be careful that the face of your profession be as sober and amiable as possible: 'walking in wisdom toward them that are without,' Col. iv. 5: or as the Psalmist expresses it, 'I will behave myself WISELY in a perfect way:' Ps. ci. 2. There is a crude or unripe sort of piety, which indeed ought not to be mistaken for hypocrisy, but is so like it, that the mistake is easily made.

The following account, given me by one, whom from the frankness of his acknowledgments, I ought to call Honestus, will sufficiently explain what I mean:—

"Though, at my first setting out in religion," said he,

"I was sincere in the main, I was yet so enthusiastic and conceited, so harsh and untractable, that my most candid acquaintance scarcely knew what to make of me. I mistook a stiff and whimsical singularity for Christian simplicity; little suspecting the temper which lurked under it. When I had been rude, I called it Faithfulness; and, when I suffered for my rashness or imprudence, I supposed it was for righteousness' sake. Other Christians met persecution; but I invited it: others left the world; but I quarrelled with it. So little did I consider the time and place for serious things, and introduced them in so strange and improper a way, that when I tried to make my friends serious, I often provoked them to smile!

"These mistakes," said he, "while they took away all weight from my character, occasioned disgust at other things in me, which were scriptural and praiseworthy; and made me rather a hindrance to the cause of religion than a help: for, while I justly lamented the errors of those I lived with, I forgot that I, in some measure, promoted the very errors I lamented. I considered not, that for want of mixing *good sense* with *good things*, I myself became a sort of argument for their vanity and extravagance. Were they checked at any time on these accounts, they immediately cried, 'What! would you advise us to imitate Honestus?'"

They, who have the cause of true religion at heart, cannot but be grieved when they see it thus misrepresented; and that, not only by designing hypocrites, but by men who, like Honestus, really mean well. Christianity is indeed plain, but not rude; simple, but not absurd; mortified, but not morose. If the Christian is a 'pilgrim and a stranger upon earth,' Heb. xi. 13, he is also, like Abraham among the sons of Heth, Gen. xxiii., to be a wise and amiable stranger. He should be too

simple, to fall into affectation: too real a character, to act a part: and too well acquainted with the evil of offences, Matt. xviii. 17, to raise them unnecessarily. In a word, he is 'not to be as the hypocrites, who disfigure their faces, Matt. vi. 16; nor as those fanatics, who by setting up one truth against another, disfigure the Gospel. It is as the Apostle speaks, 'By manifestation of the truth,' that is the whole truth, practical as well as doctrinal, that we 'commend ourselves' and our religion 'to every man's conscience in the sight of God:' 2 Cor. iv. 2.

Above all, when you treat of religious subjects avoid passionate or rude expressions: not only because they are a disgrace to your profession: but, also, because they will defeat your very design: 'for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God:' James i. 20.

Whenever you are called to give an account of your religious profession, or of any particular step which you are obliged to take for conscience sake, endeavour to commend yourself to the conscience of the inquirer, especially by the manner of your reply. The Scripture, which teaches us to be ready to answer such inquiries, charges us also to do it with 'meekness and fear:' 1 Pet. iii. 15.

Elizabeth found she could be spared at no time on the Sunday to attend the public worship of God, and therefore felt it her duty to seek another place. The lady with whom she lived questioned her on this only act. Elizabeth was humble, and naturally backward to speak: but being pressed to open her mind, she plainly stated what she felt;—her regard to God's command, the benefit she had found in attending his house, the value of the soul, the awful approach of eternity, and the shortness and uncertainty of the time allotted her to prepare for it. She mentioned also "the exceeding

great love of her Master and only Saviour Jesus Christ in dying for her, and the innumerable benefits obtained thereby."

But what more particularly leads me to mention this case, is the Christian-like spirit with which her zeal was attended.

"You seem to be very sincere," said the lady, "and I cannot but respect your piety; but, on many accounts, I should not choose to alter the rules of my family."

"Madam," she replied, "though I am obliged to leave you, I hope I shall never forget the many kindnesses I have received. In many things you have treated me more like a mother than like a mistress. I can truly say, That your favour is more to me than that of any one except God's: but he tells me, That I have a soul which must be saved or lost for ever. I find I cannot live without hope, and I can have no hope but in his ways. May he abundantly bless you and your family, while I trust him to provide for me!"

As I have been speaking throughout this chapter to such only as make a serious profession of religion, I hope that what has been said will be sufficiently plain to them.

And may the mistakes which I have mentioned, and many others which I have not room to notice, be far removed from your character, my Christian Friends! Instead of such doubtful appearances, 'do all things without murmurings and disputings, that ye may be blameless and harmless, as the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom,' I pray earnestly that *ye* may 'shine as lights in the world:' Phil. ii. 14, 15.

CHAPTER IX.

SUITABLE SCRIPTURES.

To assist you as Christian servants in the noblest of all aims, I shall, in this chapter, collect together those passages of Scripture which were written for your particular use. You will have them here in one view, and at hand: and I wish you to get them by heart, as infallible rules for your conduct and comfort.

It will be profitable also for you often to reflect upon them as part of the very profession which you make among men.

It is as if you said to the rest of mankind, 'Choose ye whom ye will serve:' but, as for us, we are the followers of one, who, with the greatest promises, has connected the following commands; and which, as his disciples, we receive as our rules of action:—'Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness' of your 'heart, as unto Christ: not with eye-service, as men-pleasers: but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good-will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men; knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free:' Eph. vi. 5—8.

Again: 'Let as many servants as are under the yoke, count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed: and they that have believing masters, let them not despise them' (or pay them less respect) 'because they are brethren; but rather do them service,

because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit. These things teach and exhort:' 1 Tim. vi. 1, 2.

A high expectation in entering the house, even of a *believing Master*, is often the forerunner of disappointment: and a high spirit will not only disorder any house; but will afterward vent itself in complaints, and multiply scandals.

Martha called upon me in trouble, and out of place; and I could plainly perceive, even from her own account, how much her troubles arose from her misconduct. She had hastily left a former service, where she enjoyed every reasonable privilege, in order to enter the house of a wealthy citizen, where her own religious views were embraced. Martha had newly taken up a profession of religion: but had not learned much more than half her lesson. She needed the advice before given, about changing places; and though she was zealous for some Scriptures, she had overlooked others; particularly such as I am collecting in this chapter.

Martha had indeed read, That 'if any man seem to be religious, and bridle not his tongue,' such a 'man's religion is vain,' James i. 26: yet the defects which she saw in the family (and what family is free from defects?) she scrupled not to censure, both at home and abroad. Instead of charitably covering, or patiently healing any disorder, she thoughtlessly inflamed it: and, where Humility would have been silent, or where Tenderness would have contrived an apology, she was too ready to accuse, and too eager to relate. She expected many allowances in such a house, but made few. With great imperfections herself, she wondered to find them in others; and, while she complained that the Gospel was not more adorned in a professing family,

she forgot that one of its chief ornaments is 'a meek and quiet spirit.'

Did Martha *mean* that 'the name of God and his doctrine should be blasphemed' by all this? Certainly not. But why did she not consider to what such a conduct as her's must lead?

I would fain hope that this character is not very common; but knowing that it really exists, I could not but point out the evil of it. Is Martha, after all, a Christian? Many will doubt it: it would be well if she doubted it herself. Certain it is, that if she be one, the further she advances in Christianity, the more bitterly will she lament her present mistakes.

Let us return again to the words of the Apostle, recollecting what he adds to those last quoted: 'If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the doctrine which is according to godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing.' 1 Tim. vi. 3, 4.

'Exhort servants to be obedient to their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again: not purloining, but showing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things:' Tit. ii. 9, 10.

If others say, "I am disposed to act well when I am treated well," a Christian should recollect, that the conduct above mentioned is enjoined, 'not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward: for this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience' sake 'toward God, endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but, if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called:' 1 Pet. ii. 18—21.

Bear with me then, my Christian friends, while in

love I warn you to reflect, that if, instead of regarding this your profession, any one of you should leave the parlour with murmurs,—if he should enter among his fellow-servants with angry and reproachful expressions, when his will is crossed, or his conduct blamed,—if he should slight the family-worship, because it may not be conducted exactly to his taste,—if he should make light of a stated agreement or contract, or forget that the inordinate 'love of money is the root of all evil,' 1 Tim. vi. 10, and prepares the heart for every thing that is mean and false,—if he should be found wasting, or making away with that which is entrusted to his care, and employing a secrecy in it which proves the guilt; in a word, if he should not be distinguished from other servants by his regard to the scriptural rules which I have just mentioned, upon what ground are they to take him for a Christian? and how is the doctrine of God our Saviour to be adorned or recommended by him?

I affectionately entreat you also to reflect, how awful the case, if any of you should thus become their stumbling-block! or lead them to suppose that Christianity is rather a name or notion that puffs up its possessors, than that holy religion which the Scriptures describe! I say, Reflect how awful it is for a Christian professor thus to become a witness against Christianity, and an assistant to 'the god of this world' in 'blinding the minds of them that believe not!' 2 Cor. iv. 4.

Here, methinks, I hear a sincere lover of the truth say, "I see more clearly the nature of my calling than I once did; and I feel that I also have made mistakes by not keeping my eye more strictly upon Scripture Rules. I perceive I shall do nothing right; but as I 'set the Lord always before me,' Ps. xvi. 8, doing service unto Him; and not merely to man, and looking unto Him for that which I am to receive, I plainly see that

many things, in which others allow themselves, are quite contrary to my profession. If they are not faithful in the smallest things, if they are disposed to please only when they are pleased, I am called to follow and imitate my Heavenly Master; taking up his cross, and suffering patiently, though it be wrongfully, as he did before me. It is but a little while that I can either suffer or serve: a little while, and a poor servant shall reign with Christ! Let me then seek to glorify Him more in my appointed station and only opportunity: and may my coming so short, even in my best endeavours, lead me to rely more simply and entirely on his merits and mediation, who 'took upon him the form of a servant;' by whose obedience alone, 'many are made righteous,' and by whose poverty alone many can become rich!"

Let me encourage such a true disciple of Christ, by considering what a testimony such a conduct as the Scriptures before mentioned recommend, must leave in every family where it is really found. Men often laugh and scoff at a Christian, when their consciences are secretly pierced with the truth of his profession. They are more goaded by truth than they choose to confess. Few, indeed, are so hardened in ignorance and sin, but at one time or other they are ready to cry, 'Let me die the death of the righteous! let my last end be like his!' Numb. xxiii. 10. Nor is any station so low and contracted, nor any prospects so unpromising, as to forbid us to hope for success by a 'patient continuance in well-doing,' Rom. ii. 7: for God, who works by instruments, often glorifies his power by employing such as men despise; and, when he pleases to work by such, nothing can prevent the execution of his design.

'Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master—but he was a leper. And the Syrians had gone out by companies, and had

brought away captive out of the land of Israel a little maid: and she waited on Naaman's wife. And she said unto her mistress, Would' to 'God my Lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy:' 2 Kings v. 1—3.

Now, from the simple report of this little captive, what surprising consequences followed! The report is carried to her lord. The king of Syria sends, in behalf of his favourite officer, to the king of Israel; and Naaman goes to the prophet. He is first led (and that by one of his servants) to cease from his reasonings on a divine appointment: he then submits to it: he receives health: he acknowledges the true God: he gives him glory; and becomes a monument to all generations of the mighty effects, which it sometimes pleases that God to produce by a servant's report.

Let me add here, that I have found Naaman to be not the only leper recovered by such a report. I have known a more desperate leprosy than his healed in a similar way. I have seen, among other instances which I could name, one of the most abandoned youths I ever knew, induced, by the patient example and affectionate persuasion of his father's servant, to turn his eyes to the 'fountain opened for sin,' Zech. xiii. 1, in the Gospel:—a man, whom the youth had before long scorned and insulted, only because, like Cain's, 'his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous:' 1 John iii. 12.

Fear nothing, therefore, standing in your appointed station, and in a right spirit; nor, on any account, let 'thy heart envy sinners' in their momentary blaze: 'but be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long: for surely there is an end, and thine expectation shall not be cut off:' Prov. xxiii. 17, 18. The highest and happiest ambition of a rational creature is to stand waiting for that commendation, 'Well done, thou good and

faithful servant! thou hast been faithful over a few things: I will make thee ruler over many things. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord:' Matt. xxv. 21.

CHAPTER X.

THE IRRELIGIOUS ADDRESSED.

As a Minister and a Friend, I must not forget those servants, who, though of very different descriptions, are yet at present destitute of true religion: that religion, the principles and spirit of which I have stated, and the disciples of which I have described. Such may have read this Address thus far, and ought by no means to find it concluded, without a special regard to their case: a case, indeed, which their Minister cannot but regard with the tenderest compassion; and therefore here adds a few reflections for their particular consideration and use. Blessed be God, our religion not only commands us to love those who differ from us, but it *influences* us to do it!

And such I would affectionately entreat to examine, whether, what shall be here addressed, be not the plain declarations of God's holy word, quite apart from matters of private opinion or doubtful disputation. All I wish for, is to call your attention to your Bible;—to bring forward what God has so repeatedly said, and what you are so unhappily disposed to forget.

Let me also entreat you to be wise in *time;* for the greater part of mankind are cut off, before they begin to think seriously. 'They die without wisdom,' Job iv. 21, because they die without taking *warning:* like that senator, who, as he went to the assembly, had an account put into his hand by some friend, of a conspira-

cy formed against his life: he was, however, too much engaged to attend to it; and therefore put it, for the present, into his pocket. He intended to read it the first opportunity; but was stabbed before that opportunity came.

It is under such an anxiety that I now put this paper into your hand. There is, indeed, a conspiracy formed against your life; yea, against the dearest part of man, your soul. This soul is very soon to enter an assembly composed 'of all nations, tongues and people,' standing before God, the Judge of all. In the way, an *Adversary* (1 Pet. v. 8) lies in wait to give a fatal stab to its everlasting happiness: sin poisons the dagger in his hand; and a careless unbelieving state of mind affords him opportunity. In such circumstances, shall I scruple to warn you in the plainest terms? God forbid! My silence would hazard my own safety. I cannot forget what was once said to a minister, 'If thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood shall I require at thy hand:' Ezek. xxxiii. 8.

The interests, therefore, of your soul are your dearest interests. You will forget the loss of all other things; but this loss will be irreparable. In losing this, all will be lost! 'For what shall it profit a man, if he should gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?' Mark viii. 36, 37.

Presumptuous minds, 'blinded by the god of this world,' 2 Cor. iv. 4, may, indeed, seek to overwhelm every consideration of this kind with scoffs and ribaldry; and try to harden themselves and others against the evil day, by the worst of all hopes, namely, "that God is not to be believed." But this desperate conduct can make no alteration whatever as to the things despised;

the awful *facts* remain: time flies apace: eternity approaches, whether we prepare for it or not; and 'God is not a man, that he should lie: nor the son of man, that he should repent:' Num. xxiii. 19. He hath declared his purpose: he hath warned us of our danger: he hath pointed out our remedy. It is his perfection, that He cannot change, nor deny himself; and therefore, he calls upon us to change; that is, 'to turn to him and live:' Ezek. xviii. 32.

Such as think to avoid a danger by turning their eyes from it, have been well compared to that silly bird, which, when closely pursued, thrusts his head into the sand or a thicket; and, because he does not see his pursuers, vainly hopes that they have lost sight of him.

But 'Wisdom crieth without, How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge! Turn you at my reproof:' Prov. i. 20—23. Our wisdom then consists, not in shutting our eyes against a danger, but in opening them to discover a refuge:—not in refusing to hear the charge brought against sin, saying with the wicked, 'Tush, thou God carest not for it;' but in humbly confessing the evil; submitting to *his* account of it, and embracing the remedy which he hath provided against it. For all attempts to conceal or excuse this evil are as vain as they are presumptuous: it meets us in the Scriptures,—in the history of every age,—in the scenes of every day,—and in our own consciences, if they are not blind or seared.

Man, indeed, may choose to make light of his guilt: but he should recollect that he is not to be the *Judge*. A criminal may plead for mercy: much more may he embrace it in any way it is offered: but in what court is he allowed to "decide upon his *deserts*?"

How the Governor of the universe ought to punish sin, and what a government of infinite perfection, like his, requires, we, insects as we are before him, can form no right notions. It is folly and presumption of the worst kind, when *we* attempt to determine what he ought to do. There is but one way left for wisdom to choose: namely, where we cannot guide ourselves, to accept of an Infallible Guide; and what it is impossible we should know without God, to come and learn of God. When we look around us, and can see no other assurance of safety, no other probable resting-place for the sole of our foot, surely it is our wisdom then to prepare for the worst that can possibly happen: and to come and rest on that foundation, which he has laid in a Redeemer. Rom. ix. 33.

Surely I say again, If any conduct deserves to be called Wise, it must be that which shuns the danger which he points out, and embraces a method of safety which he recommends; nor can Folly itself be more foolish, than to plan, not only without his counsel, but *against* it.

But what is this counsel? (for I am labouring to persuade you to abide by none but his)—What hath he said to every one of us? Is it not that 'he hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness?' Acts xvii. 31—that we should stand *ready* to meet that day, because it cometh when least expected, Matt. xxiv. 44—and that 'it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in that day, than for those' who have lived under greater advantages, and neglected them? Mark vi 11.

He, who is as 'a man taking a far journey,' and hath committed 'to every one his work,' Mark xiii. 34, speaks of a servant who 'should say in his heart, My Lord delayeth his coming;' and accordingly pursues his evil

course, equally regardless of God or man. But what is the consequence? The Lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and appoint him his portion with the unbelievers:' Luke xii. 45, 46.

He further assures us, That it is not enough that we have not been riotous or injurious, like the servant above. He informs us, That we have each a talent to improve: which you will find described at large in Matt. xxv. You will there see another servant (which means every careless sinner) coming and declaring, that, after entertaining hard thoughts of his master's requirements, he had gone, in a sort of despair, and 'hid his Lord's talent in the earth. Lo, there,' says he, 'thou hast that is thine!' What followed this wretched excuse, and what became of him whom our Lord calls a 'wicked and slothful servant,' I (who would fain secure you from this end) entreat you to read; and with it, that very awful, but instructive account of the great day which immediately follows it.

To listen, then, as this servant did, to our own vain thoughts, or to those of our unbelieving companions, instead of attending to these gracious warnings of our Lord, is certainly one of the most desperate delusions that ever entered the human heart. "I shall do as well as others," says a thoughtless creature: but should he not first learn, from the Judge of the whole earth, what others are doing? Should he embark soul and body on the ocean of Eternity upon such a presumption as this? (a sort of presumption, upon which he would scarcely risk a shilling of his property) and especially, after being expressly charged, not by his minister only, but by his Saviour, to 'strive to enter in at the strait gate,' Luke xiii. 24; and assured, that 'broad is the

way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat;' but that 'narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it?' Matt. vi. 13, 14.

To rescue you, therefore, from a 'world which lieth in wickedness,' 1 John v. 19—to prevent your committing a mistake for which no remedy is provided in eternity,—and to awaken you to the pursuit of eternal life before 'the night cometh, when no man can work,' John ix. 4—I have brought forward these scriptures; and add my fervent prayers, that they may be accompanied with a divine blessing to your heart!

CHAPTER XI.

THE INCONSIDERATE WARNED.

A PIOUS writer of the last century has some remarks, so applicable to what has just been said, that I shall select and abridge a passage or two for your use:

"Some," says he, "are so carried away by the stream of evil company, that, when one and another is cut off, it does not daunt them; because they see not whither their companions are gone. Little do they think how such are now lamenting the madness of a careless state. In Luke xvi., the rich man in hell would fain have had one sent to warn his five brethren, lest they should come to that place of torment. Probably he knew their minds and lives; and knew that they were hasting thither, little supposing that he was there.

"I remember being told of a man who was driving a flock of lambs upon a bridge over the Severn; and, something hindering their passage, one of the lambs

leaped upon the wall of the bridge, and fell into the stream: the rest, seeing him, one after another leaped also over, and were drowned: those, that were behind, little suspected what became of them which were gone before; but thought they might venture to follow their companions. Even so it is with unconverted men: one dieth by them, and falls into destruction, and another follows; and yet they pursue the same course, not considering whither their companions are gone; but when death hath once opened their eyes, and they see what is on the other side of the wall, what would they give to return!"

"Moreover," continues he, "they have a crafty and malicious enemy, whose principal business is to prevent their conversion, and to keep them quiet and secure, Luke xi. 21: and this he attempts, by persuading them to disbelieve the Scriptures, or not to trouble their minds with such matters; or by persuading them to think ill of a godly life, and that they may be saved without conversion, and that there is no need of all this stir and anxiety about it. He will tell them that God is so merciful, that there is no danger; at least, that they may stay a little longer, and take their pleasure and follow the world at present, and repent hereafter. By such delusions as these, Satan keeps them captives, and leads them to ruin!

But consider, I pray you, what means this repentance *hereafter*, with which so many are thus deluded? Can they repent at any time without the grace of God? Are they likely to obtain that grace, who continue to neglect and despise it? My concern for your safety obliges me to add, that nothing can be more express than the declaration of our Judge, That there is a time approaching in which those who have set at nought his counsel, shall indeed call, but receive no answer: Prov. i. 28.

Oh, how many of them that are lost, once vainly resolved to repent *hereafter!*

If, therefore, 'fools make a mock at sin,' Prov. xiv. 8, and if, more *foolish* still, they despise their only remedy, turn from these to the voice of Wisdom and of God, in Proverbs, chap. i.; for there you will see expressly described, both the *character* and the *end* of such men.

CHAPTER XII.

A MINISTER'S AIM.

SUCH Scriptures as have been mentioned, it is confessed, have a tendency to disturb and wound those who live in a careless and unconverted state: they were, indeed, written with this very design. Let such, however, recollect, that 'faithful are the wounds of a friend:' Prov. xxvii. 16.

When your body is disordered, you send for a physician or surgeon, and willingly submit to whatever he prescribes: you depend upon his skill and integrity through, perhaps, a tedious and painful operation, if, peradventure, you may at length regain your health. But what is the health of a dying body, compared with the salvation of an immortal soul? Or who is that earthly physician, that may be trusted like the Heavenly One, whose advice we have heard?

Much more pleasant is a minister's work in healing a broken heart, than in breaking a hard one. To warn you of your danger, is, indeed, our *duty:* but to congratulate you on your safety, would be our *joy.* We join the angels in rejoicing over a returning sinner; and, as we see you united to the flock of Christ, we are ready to cry, with the Apostle, 'What is our hope, or joy, or

crown of rejoicing? are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? for ye are our glory and joy:' 1 Thess. ii. 19, 20.

With what pleasure was that letter written (though written in bonds) which was sent by a servant returning like a new creature to his master! 'I beseech thee, for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds: which in time past was to thee unprofitable: but now profitable to thee and to me! Whom I have sent again: thou, therefore, receive him; that is, mine own bowels. He, perhaps, departed for a season, that thou shouldst receive him for ever: as a brother beloved. Receive him as myself!' Philem. 10—17.

You see plainly, here, for what a minister labours, and what is the proper effect of the Gospel; and may he, who, to meet our deep necessities, came down, and 'took upon him the form of a servant,' Phil. ii. 7, and sends by whom and in what way he will, give success to my endeavours for your benefit! that, receiving yourself the inestimable blessing of a saving conversion to God, you may become a blessing to every family with which you live! Let your prayers be united with mine to this end: and be not discouraged, because you cannot pray as you would. Pray as you can. God looketh not at the expression, but at the heart; and hath declared that 'he is nigh unto all them that call upon him:' Ps. cxlv. 18. The Scriptures which you read will furnish you with both matter and language for prayer; an example of which I shall leave you at the conclusion.

If, convinced of your sad state in having wandered from the best of Fathers, and if, tired, like the prodigal of its slavery—you are desirous to return, remember how graciously our Lord invites 'all that labour, and are heavy laden,' to come unto him for rest, Matt. xi. 28;

declaring that he will 'in no wise cast him out that comes,' John vi. 37, that his blood shall cleanse such from the guilt of sin, and his Spirit deliver them from the power of it; and that he will freely give his 'Holy Spirit to them that ask him:' Luke xi. 13.

As his servants and witnesses upon earth, we are bound to declare these truths; and to declare them with firmness, on the authority of his *word.* We can speak of them also from our own *experience:* we have been in your condition: we were convinced of our danger: we advanced upon the credit of his truth: our prospects brightened as we advanced; and the more we know of religion and its Author, the more we feel and admire its evidence and importance! Can we then avoid adopting the words of the Apostle, (though in an humbler sense,) 'That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye may have fellowship with us: and, truly, our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ: and these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full:' 1 John i. 3, 4.

It is in advancing, that you may expect the same increasing conviction; for a Christian's evidence grows with his experience. 'He, that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself,' 1 John v. 10; and, in his time and measure, shall be enabled to resist every temptation to apostasy, with the holy confidence of that faithful servant,* who, when urged to save his life by reviling his Master, replied, eighty and six years have I served Christ, and never received any thing but kindness from him; how then can I now blaspheme my King and my Saviour!"

* Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, supposed to have been a disciple of St. John, and the person meant by the Angel of the Church of Smyrna, in Rev. ii. 8. He suffered about the year 167.

A PRAYER.

ALMIGHTY GOD, 'who dwellest in the high and holy place, with him also that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at thy word,' mercifully attend to the cry of a lost sinner, who desires to approach thee in the name and mediation of thy Son Jesus Christ!

'I am not worthy of the least of all thy mercies, for I have sinned against Heaven and in thy sight. God be merciful to me a sinner.'

But 'who is a God like unto thee, pardoning iniquity, transgression and sin! Thou delightest in mercy.' Thou hast often 'called when I have refused.' Thou now criest in my heart, 'Turn ye, for why will ye die? Turn thou me, O Lord, and I shall be turned. Heal me, and I shall be healed. Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation.'

Glory to thy holy name, that when I forgot thee thou didst remember me; and still saidst, 'Seek ye my face.' Pour upon me now thy promised 'Spirit of grace and supplication;' and incline my heart to reply, 'Thy face, Lord, will I seek!' Yea, I will seek thee with my whole heart;' for 'blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causeth to approach unto thee! Remember me,' therefore, 'O Lord, with the favour that thou bearest unto thy people! O visit me with thy salvation, that I may see the good of thy chosen.'

Let 'the Spirit of Truth lead me into all truth:' and so 'Open the eyes of my understanding, that I may' savingly 'understand the Scriptures,' and find that 'wisdom which giveth life to them that have it.'

And, since thou hast given eternal life so freely, and declared this life, to be only in thy Son, grant that I

may not be of 'them that draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul:' that my trust may be alone in the Lord, my Redeemer; yea, 'God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ!' Give me rest, through his labour; health from his wounds: and life, by his death!

Grant also, O my Heavenly Father, that I 'may know what is the exceeding greatness of his power in them that believe!' Let thy Spirit be a living spring in my heart, 'springing up unto everlasting life.' Make me 'a living branch in the true vine,' that I may 'bring forth much fruit' to thy glory. May I feel 'the joy of the Lord,' to be my 'strength;' and find in every trial, his 'grace sufficient for me!'

Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed, in sending these thy promised mercies!—and that 'thy hand may be with me' in my station, 'keeping me from the evils' and temptations which attend it! Bless me, and make me a blessing to those whom I serve, to those that serve with me, and to all my relations!

As a servant, enable me to walk before thee; acting 'as in thy sight,' and as serving thee, while I serve those whom thou hast placed over me. Bless, O Lord, the family in which I live; and help me to walk before them 'with all humility of mind,' with truth and soberness, diligence and patience; "doing to others as I would they should do unto me," that I may 'adorn the doctrine of God my Saviour in all things!'

As a pilgrim, travelling from Time to Eternity, help me 'to walk by faith, and not by sight. As my day is,' let 'my strength be. Show me the path wherein I should walk, for I lift up my soul unto thee:' and 'hold thou me up' in it, 'and I shall be safe!'

As a helpless and dying worm, 'to whom should I go but unto thee? Thou hast the words of eternal life.'

Thou hast promised all I want; nor can I let thee go, 'except thou bless me.'

Graciously protect me, while I live: support me, when I come to die! Save, oh save me from 'the worm that never dieth!' and bring me, through the merits of my Redeemer, to that 'rest which remaineth for the people of God.'

In his name, and for his sake alone, I ask these mercies; to whom, with Thyself and the Holy Spirit, be all honour and glory, world without end! Amen!

AN

ADDRESS TO THE CHILDREN

ATTENDING THE SCHOOLS FOR RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION, AT ST. JOHN'S CHAPEL, BEDFORD ROW,

Occasioned by the Happy Death of one of their Schoolfellows.

Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to babes....MATT. xi. 25.

DEAR CHILDREN:

YOUR friends lately set up a school for your religious instruction: and, as they would do you good in any way, and by every method they can think of, they desire now to put another tract into your hands. It is a short account of one of your schoolfellows. It will show you the benefit of religious instruction, as well as the blessing which God has already given to the endeavours of your friends. Above all, we publish it with a hope that it will encourage you to be followers of one of your number, who has lately 'through faith and patience inherited the promises.'

This little boy (whom most of you knew) was the son of Mr. James Watt, of Eyre Street; whose office it is to go continually round the chapel, to see that strangers are seated whenever there is room.

Mr. Watt has been desired to give some account of his child, and he writes as follows:—"I became a hearer at St. John's Chapel about eight years ago, and took my son, then not five years old, with me." Observe here, dear children, that a parent taking his child to God's house, puts him in the way of God's blessing, for, 'them that honour him, he will honour;' 1 Sam. ii. 30.

Mr. Watt goes on to say, "I was soon surprised at the quickness with which he found out the different parts of the Church Service: he would stand on a seat in the aisle by my side, and join me in singing praises to God." Don't you see here, that, if some children are idle, inattentive, and disorderly at church, it is not because they CANNOT join in the worship with their parents, and profit by the service, but because they are wicked? Pray consider this, lest you provoke God on the very day, and in the very church which he hath appointed to prepare you for his church above,—and lest, in the Day of Judgment this child should be a witness against you.

But let us go on with Mr. Watt's account. "Some time after, several children who stood about the Chapel were collected together, among whom was my son: they used to attend at the house of Mr. ——, to repeat the Scriptures and Hymns which he set them. My son met with encouragement there, both from Mr. and Mrs. ——, who separately bestowed books upon him; and once, when he had received more books than others, my son told me that Mr. —— desired them 'not to fall out by the way.'

"Soon after this the School for Religious Instruction was most happily instituted, by which he obtained help from the different superintendents; but, being more immediately under Mr. ——, I must beg to refer to him, as well as to the other gentleman, for the observations they made on his conduct; and also to Mr. Mathews, the schoolmaster, as to his behaviour during the time of Divine service."

From these gentlemen, and from Mr. Mathews, we learn that William Watt was of a sickly habit, but had a strong memory—That his great attention to instruction encouraged those who taught him, and naturally drew their attention to him in return. The phy-

sician found him reading his Bible whenever he visited him; and never heard him utter a murmur under his sufferings.

"At home," says Mr. Watt, "he was pious, dutiful, and obedient; chiefly employed in reading his Bible, the Pilgrim's Progress, (of which he was very fond,) and other religious books. He often explained what he read, in a manner that surprised us. He seldom mixed in play; and when invited to a schoolfellow's house, I have been told he has left his playfellows for the parlour and a book. What is remarkable in a boy of his age, he had not at the time of his death, a single plaything. His books he desired to be given to his brother, and to four other boys belonging to the school; and to all of them (as I shall have occasion to mention again) he left a charge that they should 'prepare to meet their God.'"

This is not put down as if there was any harm in a child's having a few playthings: but to show you that while even OLD people will have their playthings and amusements, for want of a heart towards something better; so, on the contrary, the heart of a child may be so renewed and exalted by divine grace, as very early to 'put away childish things.'

"I will mention," says Mr. Watt, "only one out of many other instances of his dutiful affection for his mother, who, being unwell one night when he was in bed, he offered to rise and go out for any thing she might want that might do her good. To try him she desired he would; on which he immediately arose and dressed himself. He strictly observed the truth; and always spoke to us in a thankful and obliging manner. When I conversed with him on religion, he listened with reverence, and would make happy observations thereon. In company, he was reserved, yet would readily sing a hymn if requested."

We have never observed a child, which, like this, was dutiful to his parents, upon whom God did not set some mark of his approbation. 'Honour thy father and thy mother, is the first commandment with promise:' Eph. vi. 2. And, if God spares your lives, Dear Children, you may also observe how often he sets a black mark upon such as have been undutiful.

His father goes on to write, "In a former illness in which we thought we should lose him, he said many comfortable things: he was much engaged with the Scriptures, and in prayer. I have no doubt but the instruction that he received from Mr. —— and the other gentlemen, together with the sanctified affliction which he underwent, were the grand means of his being brought to the knowledge of 'the truth as it is in Jesus.'

"I will now come to the close of his life. On the morning of Sunday the 26th of October, he hastened to be in time at the Chapel; and, though he had an umbrella, he got wet. He went through the Scriptures appointed him to learn; and then came to me, informing me that his clothes were wet. I bid him mention it to Mr. Mathews, the schoolmaster, who immediately gave him leave to go home: he returned, had his clothes changed, and continued at home the remainder of the day, reading the Book of Martyrs. His breath, however, began to fail: we therefore found it necessary again to call for the assistance of Dr. ——, who, much to his honour, has displayed a truly Christian benevolence in his kind offices and ready attention to my children, which I shall ever regard with gratitude.

"The dear boy, however, grew worse; and awaking after a short sleep, he said to his mother, 'I never was sure I should die before, but now I am sure I shall die, and go to heaven.' He begged her to forgive him all

he had done amiss; and, after a pause, he said, 'God hath forgiven me all my sins.'

"I came into the room at this time, when he said to me, 'Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.' He went on, saying, 'The Lord is our shepherd: we shall not want. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly—Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.'"

Here you see, dear children, what true faith does. It brings a burden of guilt and sorrow to Christ the Saviour: it takes Him for its teacher—trusts his word—depends on his power—is satisfied with his favour—endeavours to obey his will—and confesses him before men. And, that the Holy Spirit can make a YOUNG CHILD such a true believer, as well as its parent, you plainly see in the case before you. We could also tell you of many other such instances, if it were necessary.

"On my asking him," continues Mr. Watt, "whether it was not a great mercy that he had such Scriptures, he said, 'I feel great comfort from them;' and then said, 'Prepare to meet your God.' On asking him whether he was not thankful for the instruction which he had received at St. John's Chapel, he said, 'Tell Mr. ——, I thank him for teaching me.' Afterward he said, 'I feel comfortable: I think I shall go to heaven.' On my asking him, what I should tell the boys at St. John's, he said, 'Tell them to prepare to meet their God; and tell them that I said so.'

"Seeing his mother shed tears, he requested me to tell her how Abraham offered up his son Isaac; and not to grieve." Observe, dear children, that your schoolfellow (like young Timothy*) knew, while a child, the Holy Scriptures, which were 'able to make

* 2 Tim. iii. 15.

HIM' also 'wise to salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus.' God made this child not only a comfort to his mother, but a comforter; and thus, 'out of the mouths of babes and sucklings he perfects praise.'

"Looking at his brother," says Mr. Watt, "he said, 'Jem, you would be happy to be in my state, but prepare to meet your God.' He now grew worse; and was greatly convulsed during the night, and departed the next day in perfect ease, (Friday, the 2d of November, 1800,) aged twelve years and nine months."

Having given you, dear children, this account of one of your schoolfellows, we wish to add two or three remarks for your use.

1. This case is sent you for INSTRUCTION. You hear accounts of true religion continually; but here you see it. In this little boy you see what your Bible means, by being 'born again'—a 'new heart'—a 'lively faith'—a 'hope full of glory.'

You see, also, the fruits which they bear, who are truly religious; that is, are united by faith to the tree of life, Jesus Christ. This child not only loved God, and his Word, and his Church: but he was a blessing, a comfort, yea a comforter to his parents, and an example to all. Nor is true religion that gloomy, uncomfortable thing, which some children foolishly suppose. You see the contrary in your schoolfellow. He was happy and thankful in life—happy in death—and is gone to be happier than I can tell you, for ever. 'For godliness is profitable for all things; having the promise of the life that now is,' so far as there is any thing good in it; and the promise 'of the life that is to come,' in which there is nothing but good: 1 Tim. iv. 8.

2. This case will afford you ADMONITION, that is, warning and caution. You see how early children may be called away by death: and, therefore, our Lord

says to all, young as well as old, 'Be ye also ready, for at such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh;' and when He cometh, we are told the small as well as great must stand before him in judgment: Rev. xx. 12. To be ready when the Judge shall come, was the grand concern of this child: he pressed this upon all around him: he begged his father to charge you to 'prepare to meet your God,' and to say this expressly from HIM. We pray you to consider how awful a witness he will be against you in that great day, if you continue in a careless state. Godly children will then be witnesses against other children. God, in having servants of all ages and in all stations, will leave others of all ages and stations without excuse. If therefore you are tempted to sin with ungodly children—so as to tell untruths—to break the sabbath—to slight instruction—to disobey your parents, and to wish to break loose from their restraints that you may follow the course of this world; Oh beware, lest God in judgment to you should say, "Let that wicked child take its course. I will give him up to his heart's lusts. He shall go on his way to destruction!" 'For the day shall come that shall burn as an oven, and all that do wickedly shall be as stubble. But, to such as fear my name, shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in his wings:' Mal. iv. 2.

3. The case of this child offers ENCOURAGEMENT to children. God has put it into the hearts of your parents and friends to bring you to the House of God for instruction, and He has put it into the hearts of others to instruct you there. They would, with his blessing, take you by the hand and guide you from that 'broad way which leads to destruction,' into the 'narrow path which leads to everlasting life.' They will feel well rewarded for all their pains and expense

in bringing, if but one of you, into the right way. They know one soul is of more worth than a whole world. You are shown, in the success that has attended their labours with this little boy, what they would do for YOU.

Watch, therefore, against the temptation of Satan, of a wicked world, and of a deceitful heart, which would discourage you, and tell you that you are but a child, and cannot yet seek God: know and trust in Christ; and be truly religious. This account proves how well a young child may, by divine grace, enter God's ways, and prepare to meet Him. This child was born with the same corrupt nature as yourselves; yet, by the help of his God, he turned out of the course of this world, and took the same path as Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, and others of the saints of God. Like the child Samuel, he early knew and served the Lord 'in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom he shone as a light in the world.' He owned his God, and his God owned him, and blessed him in life and in death.

It should also afford great encouragement to you, Dear Children, that God has set his mark of approbation on this our endeavour in setting up a school for you. He has said, 'they that seek me early shall find me:' Prov. viii. 17, and he has fulfilled this promise before our eyes in this little boy. We see Jesus still taking young children into the arms of his love and blessing them. Take encouragement from this, and call upon him with Jabez, 1 Chron. iv. 9, 10, "'Oh, thou that wouldest bless me indeed, that thine hand may be with ME, that thou wouldest keep ME' from evil, as thou didst my late schoolfellow, that, with him I may finally inherit thine everlasting kingdom, through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen."

EARLY PIETY RECOMMENDED

IN A

DISCOURSE,

ADDRESSED TO THE SCHOOLS FOR RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION, AT ST. JOHN'S CHAPEL, BEDFORD ROW, MAY 1, 1802.

Those that seek me early shall find me.... Prov. viii. 17.

Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them.—*Ecclesiastes*, xii. 1.

My dear children, this discourse is particularly addressed to you.—Our 'heart's desire and prayer to God for you is, that you may be saved.' We cannot but recollect the errors and snares of our own childhood: we admire and adore the Hand of God, by which alone we escaped: we bless him for timely help afforded us by *our* friends: and, in turn, we would now assist *you*. Oh! that *your* prayers and endeavours may join ours, and that the divine blessing may rest upon us both, while we call you to 'remember your Creator in the days of your youth!'

The Wise Man concludes a variety of instruction with an Admonition to youth; and, in order to your more clearly perceiving the meaning and importance of it, I proceed to state,

I. How, you are called to remember your Creator.

II. When, you should specially remember Him: 'In the days of thy Youth.'

III. Why, such remembrance should not be deferred:

because 'evil days come, and years draw nigh, in which thou shalt say I have no pleasure in them.'

I. Consider HOW, you should remember your CREATOR.

Begin by remembering WHO HE IS. I assure you, we, your Ministers, must come to the Bible as our only guide, to know any thing of this grand truth: and *there* we find our Creator to be that same and only God, into whose name ye were baptized; namely, the FATHER, the SON, and the HOLY GHOST; three persons, but one GOD. Any other notion of God is but a creature of the imagination; and to worship such a creature, is to worship an Idol.

Then, you should remember your Creator as to WHAT HE HAS DONE.

For 'all we, like sheep, have gone astray.' You have heard of wicked persons, who, by toys and promises, entice silly Children from their Parents' door; and, after carrying them to a distant spot in some wood or cellar, there strip them, and sometimes murder them. It is thus that Sin and Satan deceive and ruin us; and thus, robbed of every good, we must have perished in our lost state and condition, if 'God' had not 'so loved the world as to give his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' This, Dear Children, is your only hope, as well as mine. We can now come to God the FATHER, through the complete atonement of God the SON, and by the assistance of God the HOLY GHOST. And consider, after what God has thus DONE, 'how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?'

Again: you should remember your Creator as to WHAT HE IS DOING.

He is not only your Creator and Governor, but also your *Friend*. He is raising up ministers to instruct

you. He is sending you invitations and messages of grace. He is sending a word to you by his minister at this time. He not only affords you the common help and care of your Parents, but disposes kind friends in this place to instruct you in his ways and ordinances, and thus to lead you to Himself. Remember, therefore, your Creator, in these his means of Grace. Remember him by prayer, reading his word, and constantly attending his house. 'Thou meetest those,' saith the Prophet, 'that remember thee in thy ways.' Particularly watch against sabbath-breaking, the neglect of God's house, or inattention to its services while you are in it: for this is not only to forget Him, who is present, and who hath said, 'In all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and will bless thee;' but it is a despising of both the means of Grace and the hope of Glory.

Remember also your Creator as to what He HAS PROMISED TO DO.

For 'the Lord is a Sun and Shield: He will give Grace and Glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. Ho! every one that thirsteth,' saith He, 'come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money.' "Come, poor and unworthy as you are," as if God should say, "and I will give you my best blessings:—blessings, which will cheer like Wine, and nourish like Milk. As the King of Heaven, I will give beyond all you can ask, or even think; and among these blessings I will give a *new heart* and a *right spirit* to employ and enjoy them." But remember, my Dear Children, that you must *pray* for these blessings: because they are freely promised to such as ask; but not to such as prove they despise them, by asking them *not*.

Lastly, remember your Creator as to what HE HATH DETERMINED TO DO.

He will be your *Judge*. There is not one of us but must stand before his bar; and who *then* will not feel the importance of remembering his Creator while life was granted? For the youngest Child that reads his Bible, and learns to call things by the names that God calls them, and treats them as he treats them, such a child, I say, is already become truly wise, and shall be everlastingly happy. On the contrary, if a man be never so noble, or learned, or rich, yet if he does not regard what God has promised, and what he has threatened, he is but a fool in *God's* sight now, and must soon be so in his *own* sight for ever.

There was a man once, who, because he was rich, clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day, cared for none of these things which I have been speaking of. He did *not* remember his Creator: but he, that said, 'the wicked shall be turned into Hell, and all that FORGET God,' soon sent him thither; and, when he 'lifted up his eyes in hell, being in torments,' and there complained of his misery, it was said to him, "Son, REMEMBER."

Such a state is enough to make one tremble; and loudly speaks the importance of the text. Indeed all the wisdom of this world cannot furnish you with so perfect a maxim as that in your Bible;—'trust in the Lord with all thy heart, and lean not to thine own understanding: in all thy ways acknowledge him'—"Acknowledge," as one expresses it, "his *Word*, by consulting it: his *Providence*, by observing it; his *Wisdom*, by admiring it; his *Sovereignty*, by acquiescing in it; his *Faithfulness*, by relying on it: and his *Kindness*, by being thankful for it:" 'and he shall direct thy paths.'

But, in the text, there is particular mention made of the season.

II. WHEN, YOUR CREATOR SHOULD SPECIALLY BE REMEMBERED: namely, 'in the days of thy YOUTH.'

First, because Youth is the time when we are MOST CAPABLE OF RECEIVING IMPRESSIONS and forming right habits and dispositions.

You have seen a young shoot in a garden. How easily at first can it be bent and trained! But, let it grow to an old tree, and it becomes hard, stubborn, and untractable. Thus Youth is the season of growth and motion: allow me to call it the 'May-day of Man.'—If you go abroad on this day, you will see life putting itself forth in a thousand forms in the gardens and fields around you: it is also from these present appearances that we form our hopes of the Autumn. So, in youth, if the mind be not cultivated, and do not put forth blossoms of hope, we look forward to age with dismay, if not despair.

Again, Youth is the MOST DANGEROUS AND CRITICAL OF ALL SEASONS. A remembrance of its Creator is its only hope of safety.

For, to say nothing of the numbers that die in youth, there are such blights and blasts, I assure you, Children, which are ready to meet the tender plant of youth, as you will scarcely believe. You also live in a time in which these blasts are more abroad than formerly. Now there is no security against these, but putting yourselves under the protection of your Creator. Your Parents and your Ministers may teach and watch, but your real safety lies in 'abiding under the shadow of the Almighty. Surely He only CAN deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He,' and He only can 'cover thee with His feathers,

and under His wings mayest thou safely trust: it is his truth only that can be thy shield and buckler.'

To give another view:—Life is a journey through a dangerous wilderness; and, in such a journey, it will not serve us to ask any one we may chance to meet, "Which is the right way?" We need one fast friend to lead and protect us. If one of you were lost in a wood, and in danger of being starved or devoured, you would long for your Parent's own hand, and hold it fast if it were there; disregarding what strangers should say who passed by. Such an infallible friend and director you will find in your Creator. Oh, that you may be enabled to remember this!

But, perhaps, you would be ready to say to me, "If I am liable to be *misled*, yet I have never thought I was in danger of being *devoured*."—Ah! you little suspect how little yet you really know! And this will show the necessity of your remembering in youth your Creator's WORD. For has he not expressly said, 'Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the Devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour?' Now, if you knew there was a Lion in the Street waiting to destroy you as soon as you went out of these doors, what care, and what fear it would occasion! Yet, at worst, such a Lion could only destroy your *body;* whereas the roaring Lion, of which God warns you, is going about, seeking to destroy both your body and your soul: and if he can prevail with you to be forgetful of your Creator, he will effectually prevail. On the other hand, however this roaring Lion may go about, he shall neither destroy, nor even hurt such, as truly 'remember their Creator.'

Further, it is MOST HONOURABLE TO GOD, when our Youth is dedicated to his service.

When he has given us his best things, should we

present him with the dregs and refuse of ours? To see young Samuel, standing like a 'lily among thorns;' saying by every word and action, "I am indeed but a child, but he will accept my feeble services. I am God's. I rejoice in being his:"—to see a child thus separating himself from the ungodly children of this world, and shining as a bright star in a dark night:—Or to see one, like Timothy, learning from a child to know and honour those Scriptures which were 'able to make him wise unto salvation through faith that is in Christ Jesus'—What an honour to God are such infant witnesses as these!—Verily, the highest grandeurs of this world are beggary when compared with this work!

Once more. To remember your Creator in Youth is MOST PROFITABLE TO YOURSELVES.

There are but two Masters, and you must serve one of them. And what a mercy not to be the slave of Satan in your best years! What a blessing to escape the mischiefs and dangers to which you are so liable; and to be early preserved from the snares, blights, and blasts of the world, the flesh, and the Devil!

Oh! I could tell you sad stories of young people, who have been drawn aside, and who have gone on from bad to worse. They have first done wrong in little things; then, proceeded to greater; then, lost their character; till, at length, being tied and bound with the chain of evil habits, some have come to an untimely end. And what think you ruined all these? They 'forgot their God.' While Solomon remembered his Creator, saying, 'Lord, I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in: give thy servant an understanding heart'—how wise and prosperous was he in his childhood! But, when he forgot his God, how foolish and disgraceful in his old age was even Solomon!

On the contrary, I have known young persons, who

once by their ill courses were the misery and disgrace of their families, yet, upon turning to their God, became new creatures, new comforts, and new honours to their friends, as well as blessings to society.

And yet, great as the benefit of this may seem, it is but a small part of what might be said: for 'he, that is joined to the Lord, is one spirit:' he is, 'an heir of God, and a joint-heir with Christ:' nor hath it 'entered into the heart of man' to conceive 'what God hath prepared for him.' Such a Child may lose his Parents—he may be turned out into the world without a friend—he may look round and say, "I do not know to whom to go for a bit of bread:" yet if this Child can also say from the bottom of his heart, "My 'Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done:' Oh, help me to suffer it patiently, and do it sincerely!" he has a Father, and a Saviour too, that will say in return—"Fear not, 'I will guide thee by my counsel, and afterward receive thee to glory.'"

Now, my dear children, if some great man were to offer you his friendship, would you think you could accept of it too *soon?* Or if one was to bring you a sum of money, or a large estate, would you desire them to be kept from you till some future time of life? But surely the friendship of your God is infinitely greater than these: 'Remember NOW therefore thy Creator in the days of thy youth.'

But this will more clearly appear from what I proposed to consider,

III. WHY, THIS MOST IMPORTANT WORK SHOULD NOT BE DEFERRED: namely, 'because evil days come, and years draw nigh in which thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them.'

It is impossible for me to make you fully understand THE INFIRMITIES and IMPEDIMENTS of old age: if

you live long enough, however, you will know them experimentally.

I have not time in this discourse to explain to you that figurative description of one growing old which follows the text: suffice it to say for the present, that the old man is described as going down hill to his *long home*, with the loss of his faculties, and the burden of his infirmities. His sight fails: his limbs tremble: his heart sinks: he has enough to do then to bear up under himself. He can scarcely attend to any thing new, and much less perform any thing difficult. Suppose you saw a man groaning with a very heavy burden, under which he was ready to sink; and suppose, while he was thus loaded, you were to attempt to instruct him: he would naturally say, "Can I attend to any thing, with this burden upon my back? Stay, stay: surely I must be released from this load before I can hear."

But old age has not only its infirmity, but also its peculiar INCAPACITY *for improvement*. If the tree has long struck root in a bad soil, who can then remove it? If it has long been growing crooked, who can straighten it? The old tree will sooner *break* than bend.

Old Age, even in its best estate, like that of *Barzillai*, how affectingly doth it speak! 'I am this day fourscore years old; and can I discern between good and evil? Can thy servant taste what I eat or what I drink? Can I hear any more the voice of singing-men and singing-women? Wherefore then should thy servant be yet a burden unto my Lord the King?' At such a time our very 'strength' is but 'labour and sorrow.'

I protest to you that I have never discovered a greater device of the Devil, nor one more common, than putting off religion to old age. "It is time enough," says that enemy, (to which our hearts are too prone to listen) "It is time enough to think of religion when you are old.

Now is the season for a little pleasure. What harm is there in this and that? It is quite natural for youth to follow amusements; and to see as much of life as they can; and, bye and bye, religion will come of course."

COME OF COURSE! Religion come of course! What, the old deep-rooted, crooked tree transplant itself, and suddenly become straight! the best and greatest work undertaken and performed in *evil days* of pain and infirmity! Dear children, this is the counsel of him, who 'was a liar from the beginning.' I am sorry to say, that I have heard too many young persons whom he has deceived speak in this manner. To be secure, therefore, from the destructive effects of such evil counsel, 'Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth.'

Old age too has its own TEMPTATIONS as well as youth. It is prone to fear every thing, and to doubt every thing, but naturally indisposed to learn any thing. It is apt to sink into peevishness; and entertain a fondness for its own opinions, and therefore of course cannot easily bear to be instructed. Besides which, there is a weariness and languor that cannot bear disturbance, though every thing important be at stake. It naturally seeks rest:—"Let me alone," cries the old man: "let me alone. Let me die in peace. If I am wrong, I must be wrong. I am too old to learn. It is too late to think of any thing new. If the tree be crooked, it must remain crooked; and, as it falls, so it must lie." —Children, whenever you observe these *evil days* of old people, think of the words of our text.

On the other hand, before these *evil days draw nigh*, what wisdom to prepare against their coming! —to have a firm staff to lean upon, when flesh and heart fail!—to have in ready use a lamp for your erring feet, and a cordial for your fainting spirits, through faith in the word of a faithful Creator!—to become, from long

experience, a witness, like Obadiah, of the truth and grace of Him, whom you have served from your youth! What on earth is a more blessed and honourable post than this? 'The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness.'

I shall conclude this Discourse, by first answering a common OBJECTION, and then adding a word of EXHORTATION.

The OBJECTION which a young person is apt to bring, (and which, while young, I felt myself) is this: "I believe," says he, "that real religion is the *better part*;—the 'one thing needful,' which, alone, 'shall never be taken away.' I believe there is nothing that can for a moment be balanced against it: 'for what shall it profit' me, 'if I could gain the whole world and lose my own soul?' What a shocking thing it would be, upon leaving this world, to have nothing on which to rest the sole of my foot! Certainly, to be truly religious, is to be truly wise. But, the great difficulty is HOW, and by what *means*, I may attain to it? For when I have tried to remember my Creator, my heart and thoughts are the next moment gone from Him. Sometimes, after a sermon, I go home, and think what a blessed thing it is to be a Christian: but, on the Monday, other things come before me, and drive these better thoughts away; and I feel no disposition through the week, to pursue them. I imagine, therefore, that I am not *able* to be religious."

My Dear Children, I have felt all this before you: but observe, I knew not then expressly the Christian Secret, where to get strength; and therefore failed in my endeavours. We, who have long run the Christian Race, feel that we have no 'power in ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves,' but 'our sufficiency is of God.' Yet the Apostle, who said this, could also say,

'I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me.—My Son,' saith he, 'be strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus.' Observe, Children, he was to be strong through the 'grace which is in Christ.' Now we can say the same to you, be strong: but in *His* strength. You must not only believe in Him, as a Saviour through his Cross; but hope to run the race which He sets before you, by his 'POWER working in you to will and do of his good pleasure.' Run, there fore, by 'looking unto Jesus.'

Suppose there was a necessity for you to lift a great weight from the ground: you might indeed try, and try again, and find your own strength exerted in vain; but if your Friend or Parent, who set you the task, came and joined his hand to yours, it might then be lifted with ease. And thus it is that the feeblest Christian succeeds in his endeavours.

Or, to return again to the garden:—you have heard of trees being ingrafted: now the graft is a little stick or peg of wood, which would dry and rot if left by itself; but the gardener fixes it into the stem of a living tree, and, thus receiving life or sap from the stem to which it is united, it soon becomes one with the tree itself, and thereby buds, and blossoms, and brings forth fruit. In this way we find our Lord teaching his disciples how to succeed in his service. 'I am,' says he, 'the vine: ye are the branches. He that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me, ye can do nothing.'

You see then, Dear Children, the Christian's Secret. He employs almighty grace for the performance of work, which cannot be done without it. 'Take my yoke,' saith Christ, 'and learn of me, and ye shall find rest.' Bear my *Cross*, and ye shall find it bear *you*. If your Father, or Mother, or Minister is pressing forward in

the heavenly road, bless God for the example; but believe me, neither your Father, your Mother, nor your Minister could bear up under their difficulties, if there was not one mightier to bear *them* up. He is able to do the same for you, a Child; and has already done it, in innumerable instances. If even so great a character as David be left to himself, the weakest and vilest creature cannot fall lower than he did.

Upon the whole, you see that nothing in religion can be done *without* Christ, while every thing to which he calls us may be done *with* him. In this way it is, that the Christian becomes a conqueror: for 'who is he, that overcometh the world; but he, that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?'

I shall leave you this morning with only adding a short word of EXHORTATION.

You have been shown,

1. How you should remember your Creator. 2. WHEN HE should specially be remembered: and 3. WHY you should not put off this remembrance. Now let me beseech you to think seriously of the dreadful evil of living longer destitute of a real acquaintance with, and remembrance of your God; and to think on the other hand, of the blessed privileges of those who truly 'remember' Him. 'Cleave to him,' therefore, 'for He is thy Life.' And that, in the days of thy youth; for then it is not only done with less difficulty, but your Youth may be your only opportunity for doing it at all; and should you even live to old age, I have shown you how *evil* those days are for such a work, and how unlikely it should succeed if put off to that time.

Oh that it may please God to help, if it were but one of you, to become wise unto salvation from this moment! Then shall we and even the angels rejoice that another lost sheep is found and secured. In thus addressing

you, we seek only to make you truly rich, truly wise, truly happy: and we know none can be really so till he remembers his Creator.

When you see a poor, forsaken, wicked Child, wandering about the streets, ragged, hungry, and diseased, you are naturally led to pity him; but it would be well if you recollected that his rags and hunger, and disease are not the *principal* parts of his wretchedness. They render him, indeed, very pitiable, and call for such help as we can afford him; but, as I said before, his outward want is not the *worst* part of his misery: the worst part is, what we call his *moral misery*, namely, that he knows not God, and never remembers his name but to profane it—that he is a willing slave of the devil, who tempts him to swear, to lie, and to steal—that in short he is a lost sheep, wandering from Christ, the true and only shepherd and bishop of souls. What are his outward rags, and filth, and wants, and diseases, compared with this? They only respect his dying body; but these wants and disorders beggar and destroy his immortal soul.

But now suppose that any one of us could bring this poor Child to read the Bible, to pray for grace, and to 'remember' his 'Creator in the days of his youth;' his wants and disorders might be removed: but even if they were to remain, and he to lie in the street, like Lazarus, covered with diseases, and with none but dogs to pity him: yet, if his heart could rise to God, and his faith take hold of a Redeemer, what then would be the changes and chances of this mortal life to him? As it was said of Joseph in his affliction, it must be said of him in his very lowest and worst temporal circumstances—his 'God is with him:' Angels are ready to receive him; and a crown of glory is preparing for him.

You have also heard, that your Creator will judge the world which he has made; and that the day cometh, when 'great and small shall stand before him.' Consider, my dear children, what a joy it will be to any of you in that day to be able to say—"I know the Judge. I have trusted in his promises. I have remembered him in my feeble prayers and endeavours; and now I know that he will remember ME."

Does such an one wish to ask, "Will he remember me? Will he remember me, should I die while a poor little child—and that, among the millions who shall stand before Him in that great day?—Will He indeed remember ME?"—Hear what he says, (and when you hear any thing from his word, say to yourself, "At least THIS is certain") 'They that feared the Lord, spake often one to another; and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up my Jewels: and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.'

That these truths may be written in every heart, God of his infinite mercy grant for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

ADDRESS

TO THE

PARISHIONERS OF CHOBHAM AND BISLEY.

London, Jan. 16th, 1801.

MY DEAR PARISHIONERS:

My sending an address to you at this time, is in consequence of a violent attack, which I lately received from my old and painful disorder while at Chobham, and which obliged me to return suddenly from a situation which I found so prejudicial in the winter season. This prevented my expressing to you more at large what I now briefly attempt by a letter.

Nothing could render me more happy while I was with you, than to find that a serious regard to true religion had taken place in some of your minds. I trust I can say, with the Apostle, 'I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth:' 3 John, 4.

It was, however, with some anxiety, that I received the information that some of you had lately held such meetings for private religious instruction, as well as devotion, as may eventually prove inconvenient. I have lived to see that sometimes unforeseen and dangerous consequences have followed the best intentions: and also that the safest way of preventing such consequences is to meet the wishes of such as are religiously disposed, as nearly as propriety will admit. It was the opinion, therefore, both of myself and my valuable Assistant, that it would be expedient for one of us to pre-

side in any assembly of yourselves that should be thought necessary for your edification. We considered that this would be the most advantageous means for securing at once *Unity*, *Harmony*, and *Truth*,—points highly essential in a day like the present, in which divisions and heresies of all sorts are rending the Church of Christ, and exposing his religion to the contempt of its adversaries. We thought, therefore, that the pious purposes of your assembling together would be fully answered, in your attendance upon our family-worship and exposition of the Scriptures on the Sunday evening, and one other evening in the week. But I meant this only as a resource in that season of the year, in which it would prove dangerous to my health (and perhaps to some of yours) to attend in the evening at Church, as I used to do in the summer. I am glad also to commend your ready concurrence with us in this measure.

With respect to the *Doctrines* of Christianity, I need not repeat what I have so lately enlarged upon among you. I will, however, remind you, that, next to what the Scriptures present, the best view which I ever met with of those doctrines, is to be found in the Articles and Liturgy of our Church. But, to say nothing here of the dangerous errors of some who oppose them, I wish you to beware of that Narrowness of Mind, which is so ready to catch and cavil, at a few expressions in them. For such objectors, we are apt to turn aside to vain and unprofitable janglings, 'doating about questions, and strifes of words: whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, and evil surmisings:' 1 Tim. vi. 4. Let us rather be thankful that we live under a Government, which maintains a Church built upon the sound and evangelical principles of our illustrious Reformers, and which they sealed with their blood.

There is, however, one point which I see reason to mention more particularly: I mean the *Spirit* or *Temper* of Christianity. This, I fear, has sometimes not been sufficiently attended to, by even those, who have shown great zeal for its doctrines. We should attend, not only to what Christ and his Apostles spoke and did, but also to the spirit and temper in which they spoke and acted. We should mark how they conducted themselves, not only towards their friends, but towards their most violent enemies. With what patience and forbearance, with what sobriety and charity, did they recommend their faith! 'Ye are witnesses,' says one, 'and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblameably we behaved ourselves:' 1 Thes. ii. 10. Therefore, whether as Masters or Servants, as Husbands or Wives, as Parents or Children, be careful not to fall into so gross a mistake as to think it sufficient if you merely learn and maintain the *Doctrines* of the Gospel: but see also that you study and imbibe its *Spirit;* and that ye so set it forth in your tempers, dealings, and conversations, at home and abroad, that, 'with well-doing, ye may put to silence the foolishness of wicked men:' 1 Pet. ii. 15.

Besides which, by being thus not only almost but *altogether* Christians, you will prevail and prosper in several other important respects.

1. You will glorify GOD: you will shame his adversaries: you will prove the truth of his word; and be his witnesses, that He still, by his Spirit, dwelleth with men on the earth.

2. You will edify your NEIGHBOUR, by showing him what Christianity *is*, and what it *does* for men. You will show what it is to be a real branch in the True Vine; and thereby every sincere inquirer after

truth will be convinced of the reality and excellence of your religion, and be induced to seek after it.

3. You will hereby best assist your MINISTERS in their labours. What they declare and describe, you will prove and exemplify: so that we shall be able to say of you, as the Apostle did of the Corinthians, 'Ye are our Epistle, written in our hearts, known and read of all men:' 2 Cor. iii. 2.

4. You will be YOURSELVES 'blessed in the' deed.

I mean to return to you as soon as the precarious state of my health permits; and then shall hope for an opportunity of discoursing on these things more largely. In the mean time, you shall have my earnest prayers for your daily advancement in true religion; and I request yours for me, as the best return which you can make or I can receive.

Beloved, let us fear nothing in a right cause. *Only*, to use the Apostle's words, 'let your conversation,' or general conduct among men, 'be as it becometh the gospel of Christ; that, whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel, and in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God:' Phil. i. 27, 28.

With respect to my Parishioners in general, I desire here to express my grateful acknowledgments of the numerous civilities which I have upon all occasions received from them: especially for their remarkable attention to the discourses delivered by me to them from the pulpit.

I have reason, however, to lament, that there are some in my parish, who lately appear not only to have

received no benefit from my ministry, but who are even offended at it. That vital and practical Christianity, like its Author, should often prove an offence, was foretold by its Author repeatedly, and that in the clearest terms. He bids every Christian, and especially every Minister, weigh the consequences of becoming his Disciple.—'Which of you,' says he, 'intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first and counteth the cost?' Luke xiv. 28. And who, let me ask, was ever exempted from this *cost*, that was a real builder? Not the Prophets; nor the Apostles; nor Christ himself; nor any real Minister of Christ, that ever I heard or read of. This arises from the very nature of things; for, (to change the metaphor) till man has some sense of his disease, he will, like a sick man, who fancies himself well, oppose the kindest friend, who offers him a sovereign remedy.—Having therefore counted the cost, and knowing the natural indisposition of man to the remedy of God; I hope we shall neither be surprised nor discouraged, in meeting those consequences, which, as Ministers of Christ, we are forewarned by him to expect.

As one, however, that watches for your souls, and must give an account of his Ministry, I earnestly entreat you to consider what an awful thing it is to 'walk in the counsel of the ungodly,' to 'stand in the way of sinners,' and to 'sit in the seat of the scornful.' But if, whilst the whole counsel of God is declared, you should be found so lost both to your duty and your interest, as to continue to reject or neglect it, this, by God's help, shall not prevent my continuing to seek your good, in the use of the only means that can promote it. It shall not provoke me to 'return evil for evil,' and 'railing for railing, but contrarywise blessing:' 1 Pet. iii. 9. It shall not prevent my hoping for the recovery of a bit-

ter opposer; having formerly been myself more bitter than he. It shall not prevent my endeavouring to affect him by invitations and persuasives. I will call upon my heart to wait, and hope, and pray, for his return to God. I will watch for the first appearances of it. I will omit no means to cherish it when it appears: nor dare I omit, if such a one still persists in his opposition, to declare to him fully and plainly the dreadful and inevitable consequences thereof.

Men and brethren, think seriously on these things—'things that belong to your peace'—and THAT 'before they are hidden from your eyes.' I shall soon cease to speak to you of them, and you to hear: but both of us assuredly must give an account of them to God. That we may be so prepared to meet Him, that 'he that soweth and they that reap may then rejoice together,' is the sincere and fervent prayer of

Your affectionate Minister,

RICHARD CECIL.

A WORD ON THE PEACE,

WITH

A HINT FOR A LASTING ONE;

IN A LETTER TO G. S., ESQ. OF B——.

Second Thoughts are best.

Oct. 15*th*, 1801.

DEAR SIR,

I RECEIVED your letter, desiring a few thoughts on the Peace, which you wish to disperse in your populous neighbourhood. Though I can say nothing as a politican, yet, rather than disoblige you by saying nothing at all, I will tell you what occurred on my first receiving the welcome news.

You know I am an invalid, and growing into years; and, as age and sickness naturally seek quiet, I retire during the summer months to a small village in Surrey, whieh lies some miles from the high road. Here, indeed, I obtain a relief which the town does not afford: but one inconvenience attends our situation—we have no means of knowing what is going on in the busy world, except the tidings which a gentleman from the city brings, who visits his family here once a week; and also what we learn from our weekly paper.

Now, our friend, whose return on the Saturday we eagerly watch, came down, and astonished us with the unexpected news of—PEACE! A knot of neighbours was soon assembled to hear the account: but, though

a few rejoiced that a stop would at length be put to the effusion of blood and the cries of widows and orphans, that provisions would be cheaper, trade flourish, and the occasion of much enmity be removed, &c. &c. yet I could perceive other springs at work: One, who had a house and land to sell, listened eagerly, and hoped Peace would bring Purchasers: A poor Labourer crossed the road, and tried to edge in his thought, that bread, though fallen, would be still lower: A Farmer stood *thoughtful*, but said nothing: Another, who had served a neighbouring camp, doubted, after all, what sort of a peace this might turn out: But, our carpenter was loud on the occasion: "Peace, at any rate," said he, "is best for the nation: *deals will come down finely now*, I'll warrant ye."

We, however, set the bells a ringing immediately, though late on the Saturday evening: we went to church the next day, but thought and talked too much of the Peace, and its consequences; and, on the Monday, we were all alive in preparing to celebrate it. Though I bear the character of a precise and retiring kind of man, I endeavoured to join my neighbours in their expressions of joy. I lighted up my windows: I suffered my children and servants in the evening to be the endangered spectators of the blaze and noise with which the village was filled: I contributed to the ringing, though I feared it would end in drunkenness; and rather encouraged the discharge of guns, squibs, and crackers, though disorder and mischeif were the probable consequences.

But the occasion was great, and I was willing to appear pleased, as I really was. "These expressions," said I to myself, "of our general joy must not be strictly scrutinised as to the *manner*."

At length I put out my snuffs of candles; and, after

hearing the narrow escapes of my children from being set on fire by the squibs, and reproving my maid for staying out too late among greater mischiefs than squibs, we retired to rest.

Presently after this came our Newspaper, and amused us afresh. We found that the display which had thrown our villagers into amazement, was but as a rushlight in the general blaze of joy. We read of the ingenious and expensive devices with which the metropolis and other great towns were illuminated; of feastings, of processions, of bands of music, of military salutations, and of mails coaches covered with trophies, met by parties, and drawn home in triumph without horses.

"Well," said I, "the occasion is great; and big with benefits of various kinds, far more extensive than we can fully comprehend. What kind of man is he, that can be unmoved? Certainly he must be stupid and infatuated to a high degree! He must be ————. But, stay a little: may we not mistake on the other side? May we not be so carried away by a present benefit, as to quite lose sight of a GREATER? Let us think again. Is the Bible a fable? Is time of more importance than eternity? Are we, perishing sinners, quite sober in being so alive to *temporal* events, while *eternal* ones seem constantly forgotten? Let us think again—"

Repeating this in different ways, as I sat dosing by the fire-side, my imagination presented to me a number of persons in a vessel at sea, which had nearly been wrecked by a violent storm. The Pilot told them that they could stay but a little while longer on board; but, if they took to the boat, and, by the help of their compass, made directly for the next harbour, they might yet be secure: "but," said he, "if you stay here, talking of the late storm, and rioteously enjoying your es-

cape, we may all yet go to the bottom." "Hold your tongue, you dull blockhead," said one: "no croaking here:" "Tap the cask," said another: "A song, a song!" cried a third. Clamour soon drowned remonstrance: and, thus scorning the Pilot's counsel, they sat down together to enjoy themselves, with their backs to the harbour. But, while the song was singing a mighty wave rolled, and (except the Pilot, who had leaped into the boat) they all went down together.

This reverie turned my mind into a new train of thinking. When I first sat down, the present Peace seemed to be every thing, but now it appeared COMPARATIVELY to be nothing. "Every thing," said I to myself, "is great or little by comparison. What is this Peace, which seems to carry away the hearts and thoughts of the nation: when compared with the Peace, proclaimed from above through a Redeemer, sung by angels at his birth, purchased by his death, and by which He opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers?"

The *present* Peace is proclaimed to a few countries, but the *eternal* Peace to all nations. Wise men fear the *present* Peace will still leave us in danger from the seducing arts and deranging principles of our enemies; but the Peace of the Gospel secures its children not only against the craft and malice of the world, but of the flesh and the devil. The *present* Peace still leaves us under many wants: it cannot relieve us under pain of body or mind: we may still remain erring, afflicted, depraved, guilty, dying sinners: but the Peace of God bringeth a Guide to the wanderer, Comfort to the afflicted, Grace to the depraved, Pardon to the guilty, and eternal Life to the dying. The *present* Peace may be broken almost as soon as it is made, but the Peace from above has this charter—'The mountains shall

depart, and the hills be removed: but my kindness shall not depart from thee; neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee:' Isaiah liv. 10. Once more: the *present* Peace, however lasting, can continue but a short time to any of us who have been so animated by the news; but that Peace, which is secured by the promise and oath, Heb. vi. 18, of God to those who 'flee for refuge to the hope set before them' in Christ Jesus, cannot be disturbed by time or death: time but ripens it, and death perfects it. 'For the righteous hath hope in his death—He shall enter into peace.'

In a word, the Peace of God, unlike all other, is proposed most freely to *every* man: it is attended with no *danger:* it will meet *every want:* it admits of no *hazard:* it can never *end.* Whoever, therefore, continues madly to despise counsel, and perish in a vessel that soon must sink, let us be *wise;* let us hearken to counsel before it is too late; let us take to the boat, and make for the harbour: that while others, like the sottish sailors, think of nothing but the peace and festivity of a moment, we may secure a peace and prosperity which shall last for ever.

I am, &c. R. C.

SHORT HINTS TO A SOLDIER,

IN A LETTER FROM HIS FRIEND.

A word spoken in due season, how good is it. . . . Prov. xv. 23.

MY GOOD FRIEND:

I WAS thinking, the other day, of the quiet which I enjoy, while you are gone forth in arms to defend me. I also considered what I could do for you in return. "The Physician," said I, "though he does not fight, can bring medicines to the sick and wounded: and even a ploughboy might lead a regiment into a road which they had missed. Cannot I then do something for these brave fellows? Some of them may be sick, and others sad. Some may not be aware who are their Worst Enemies; and others may not know their Best Friends; and others still may never yet have heard what is the True Victory. I will try, at least, to serve them in these things. For who can tell?"

"Besides," thought I, "do I not know how useful a hint has sometimes been to me? and do I not know what benefit a great soldier once received by a hint from a little maid, telling him of a great Prophet who could cure him of his leprosy?* Why may not other Soldiers be profited by a word as well as he? I say these my defenders should not want a real friend to instruct and comfort them. I will, therefore, write them a letter; and appeal to the Bible for the truth of it."

A good Soldier is one who, as the Wise Man expresses it, 'fears God and the King, and meddles not with

* 2 Kings, v. 2, 3.

them that are given to change:' Prov. xxiv. 21. While bad men will always be murmuring and complaining, he knows his privileges as an Englishman. He is firmly attached to his King and Country. He feels bound, in honour and conscience, to defend both. He scorns to tarnish the British name by cowardice, idleness, drunkenness, fraud, swearing, indecency, or the like.

He also knows that there is no villainy or cruelty greater than that of robbing a poor, innocent girl of her character and virtue; sinking her thus into prostitution, and destroying at once her body and soul. He knows, too, that those, who tempt him to disbelieve the Bible, or to mock at sacred things, would, if they could, make him an enemy to God and goodness, cut off his only hope, and turn, as it were, a man into a devil.

When Rogues come and tell such a soldier, that to be free, he must be a rebel, he is too wise to be caught with the bait. He knows, that without subordination and obedience, the army, and every other society, must be turned into a Bedlam:—that civil war is the worst of all war:—and that such, as do not submit to lawful authority, can enjoy neither liberty nor property; but must become the slaves of any tyrant or mob, that happens to get uppermost.

And, because a Soldier's life is a life of danger, a wise Soldier learns how to stand prepared to meet every enemy, under every form, and at any moment. For, having the favour of Him, who governs and directs all things, and who he knows will make him happy, whether he lives or dies, he has nothing to fear.

"Fear the Enemy!" perhaps you are ready to say: "There is not a man among us that has any such fear. We stand ready to meet the worst. We are ready to"——

Stay a little, my good friend, and let me ask you, Have you well considered who your *worst enemies* are?

"Why yes, to be sure we have"—some might answer: "What enemies can be worse than the French? They mean to do here, as they have done wherever they came. They mean to strip us of our property, to ravish our wives and daughters, to make slaves of us, and then tell us we are free. Besides which, they" ——

Pray don't tell me of what every body knows. I want to tell you what every body does not yet know, namely,

I. Who are our WORST ENEMIES:

II. Who are our BEST FRIENDS: and

III. Which is the TRUE VICTORY.

First, then, as to our ENEMIES.

And I must inform you, that we have worse enemies than even the French themselves.

"Is this possible?" say you.

I say yes. For those enemies are worse than even the French, who have made the French what they are, and would make the English like them.

"Pray name these Enemies."

I will. They are the *World*, the *Flesh*, and the *Devil*.

"But what do you mean by the *world*?"

I mean the world (not as God made it, but) as *sin* has made it. 'For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world:' 1 John ii. 16. Now when Money, Pride, or Pleasure promises you happiness in breaking God's commands—and too many are encouraging you by bad examples and conversation to break them—say, "Here is one of my worst Enemies! This is the *world!* This is that cheat, which, like the apple that Eve was tempted with,

would take away my heart from God, his Favour and his Kingdom, where only true joys abound."

"And what is the *Flesh?*"

It is the scripture word for the sin of our nature, and that corrupt heart of man which it declares to be 'deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked,' Jer. xvii. 9, and which is naturally so set upon the world. We may know this Enemy by its works, which you may read in Gal. v. 19. 'Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulation, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: and they which do such things, shall not inherit the kingdom of God.'

"And who is the *Devil?* for some have tried to persuade me that as to a devil, it is all a bugbear."

Yes; and the Devil himself will persuade you to believe them if he can. Don't you think it likely, that, if the French could make a landing, they would send their scouts to tell you that *it is all a bugbear*, till they had got into the heart of the country?

But you know I promised to appeal to the Bible, and not to a crafty enemy's account of himself. While he is acting in ambush, our Bible says, 'Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the Devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour, whom resist steadfast in the faith:' 1 Pet. v. 8.

"Why these are enemies," perhaps you will say, "that I never seriously thought of. These notions are quite *new*."

But how so? Were you not baptized, and signed with the sign of the Cross, "in token," as the Church says, "that hereafter you should not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and manfully to

fight under his banner against *Sin*, the *World*, and the *Devil*, and thus to continue Christ's faithful Soldier and Servant unto your life's end ?"

But, whether known or not, these are our *worst* Enemies: and it is on this account that the bad principles of the French are more to be feared than their swords. But know your enemies, whether in France or England. Whoever or whatever leads you from God and goodness to unbelief and wickedness, call an *Enemy*. Nor need you to stand and inquire how to *name* such an enemy, for it signifies little which of three murderers makes an attack on us; or whether a man is killed by a *bullet*, a *sword*, or a *dose of poison*.

And consider, I pray you, what a shocking thing it is for a brave fellow, after he has routed the French, to fall a prey to still worse enemies. The French, if they conquered us, could but kill the *body*; but the enemies whom I have mentioned will sink both body and soul in the Pit, 'where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched:' Mark xi. 44.

Now if you do seriously consider, you will be ready to ask, "What can I do against such enemies as these?"

I answer, a man may often do that by the *help of friends*, which he cannot do alone. God himself comes to help a man, when he sends him a real Friend.

Of your FRIENDS I shall speak next. And as it is a great thing to find a real friend, so it is wise to *know* him while he lasts. Many a man has mourned that he never knew his true friend till he was gone.

I need not say that he, who relieves your wants, comforts you in trouble, visits you when sick, corrects your mistakes, gives you good counsel, and is concerned for your interest, or that of your family, is a real *friend*.

The Government under which you live, and all who

strive to promote rule and order under it, are real *friends;* for, by them, we all enjoy that liberty and tranquillity of which no other nation can boast.

Those officers also are to be considered among the number of your best friends, who endeavour to restrain vice and immorality; and thereby render you sober, respectable, and able Soldiers: and especially such as add to their command the great force of their *example*, in chastity, sobriety, and regular attendance on public worship.

But still I must tell you that you and I have *enemies* and *wants*, which no friend or power upon earth can relieve us under. If you could ask our most excellent and gracious Sovereign King George about this, he would tell you that there are benefits to be had, which he himself cannot give, and of which he stands in as much need as you or I: ay, and what is more, that he himself would be deplorably miserable after all, if he should be put off with a crown only, and miss these benefits:—I mean pardon of all our sins—peace with God—an assurance of his favour—victory over every enemy—and an everlasting crown. All these have been purchased for sinners: the chief of sinners have received them, and they are set before you in the Gospel; as it is written, 'Whosoever will, let him take the waters of life, freely:' Rev. xxii. 17.

Now to know *that* Friend, who can deliver from every enemy, and supply every want—One, without whom a King must become poorer than a beggar, and by whom a beggar may become richer than a King—this, I say, is knowing something to purpose.

I declare to you, Soldier, that, while I am writing, the thought of such a Friend brings such comfort to my heart, that I am well paid already for my labour.

This I say again is good news; which is what the

old word *Gospel* signifies: but not more good than *true*.

Who then are those atheistical wretches, abroad and at home, who are seeking to destroy this Gospel, and rob you of your only help and comfort? What are they like but a pack of madmen or idiots, who, when they had set fire to your magazines and stores, pulled down your barracks and hospitals, and destroyed your arms, could not afterwards set up so much as a shed to cover you, give you a morsel of bread, or bring you a better weapon than a child's pop-gun for your defence?

But, to return. The Gospel presents a FRIEND. Among other names he is called the CAPTAIN OF OUR SALVATION: Heb. ii. 10. He makes his Soldiers invincible, by putting upon them the 'whole Armour of God,' Eph. vi. 13; and, having 'all power in Heaven and in earth, he supplies all their wants out of his riches in glory.'

When man, at the beginning, was enticed from his God, and fell among enemies and wants, this Deliverer was promised. He came, according to this promise. He lived and died, 'the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God:' 1 Pet. iii. 18. Having taught us his Father's will, he laid down his life for our transgressions; and, in dying, conquered our enemies; and, having made our peace with God, rose a conqueror, 'leading captivity captive, and receiving gifts for men:' Eph. iv. 8.

"Oh," perhaps you answer, "I have heard of Jesus Christ, and don't doubt what you say of him; for I never was so wicked as to reject the Bible: but, somehow, I don't know how to get any help or comfort from him:—I am not religious.—What can a Soldier do?"

Whenever you can procure the life of the brave Col.

Gardiner, read it; and you will see what a soldier can do. In the mean time I will tell you, not a Fable, but a matter of Fact.

There was not, perhaps, a more wicked fellow in all the service than a soldier I am acquainted with. But, one day, while he was gone two or three miles from the troop, it rained so hard, that he was glad to take shelter in a farm-house.

Now it happened that a good man lived there, who soon began talking of what lay very near his heart, as you know we are all apt to do: and what should this be, but the inestimable Friend I have been recommending to you? And he talked thus:

"A friend in need is a friend indeed: and there are times in which every man feels the need of such a friend. But vainly do we hope to find him among men. Yet I know such a one may be found. Indeed all I have discovered to purpose is, that none but Jesus Christ can do me any good. Trouble was sent to preach my need of his help; but I was a good while before I knew what to do. At length, however, he, that had long called to me by his word, gave me ears to hear, and a heart to follow him. Well, at length, weary and heavy laden, I came for help to him, and I have found it, and all I want in it: and now I cannot help telling to others that there is no malady of the soul, but there is an infallible remedy for it in Jesus Christ: nor any thing which we can want, but he is as willing as he is able to give it."

It still kept raining, and the soldier was kept hearing while several parts of scripture were compared; and he saw that the grand design of all scripture was to show the Saviour to the Sinner, and bring the Sinner to the Saviour; and it appeared that the good Samaritan, Luke x. 33—35, who bound up the wounds of the

man who fell among thieves, took him to the inn and provided for him, was but a picture of this Friend.

At length the weather cleared, and the Soldier went away; but not in the state of mind in which he had entered the house. He went (as he lately told me) with the farmer, on the next Sunday, to hear an eminent clergyman; and then God brought the truth home to his heart. He called at the house of an acquaintance of his, who told me how surprised he was to hear him say, after he had sat a few minutes, "Tom, I have been a mad man all my life, and am but just recovered:" and then related what he had heard, and what he felt.

For, as a man wakes out of a dream, and recovers his right mind after the wild imaginations of the night are past, and tells the first person he meets of the disorder in which his spirits have been: so did this Soldier talk to his friend. He plainly saw how dreadfully he had been fighting against God and his own soul, by a course of swearing, drunkenness, debauchery, and unbelief. He now felt what a bad example, yea what a curse he had been to his fellow soldiers! what an awful evil sin is, with which he had sported! and what a depth of misery he must have fallen into had he been cut off in such a course! He also felt that he never could be sufficiently thankful for the repentance which God had now given him: and for the lively hope afforded him in those gracious promises made to returning sinners.

He did much more. Many talk of religion who have none; but this man proves his recovery by a new course of life; and he proves, that, when a man has a heart to serve God, he may serve him in any station of life. If some, from ignorance, scorned that change in him which he had formerly scorned in others, no man

was so ready to forgive; for he felt no man owed so much to forgiveness. No man was so faithful to his trust or obedient in his station: for he served his God while he served his King. No man bore up more nobly under difficulties; for he knew they were all appointed of his God, and were working together for his good. No man faced death with so firm a heart; for he knew, that, whether he stood or fell, he was secure of life everlasting, through the promise and grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Besides which, I must tell you that he had and still has more courage than many, who only can stand the push of a battle. He calmly dared to confess his Friend before men; and to declare, upon every proper occasion, "I owe all that I am, and all that I hope to be, to the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ."

I again remind you that I have not invented this account, but tell you the real history of one who is still living to the honour of his FRIEND and the good of mankind.

If you have such a sense of sin as has been described, you will be apt to doubt whether his friend is willing to be *yours*. Remember the Enemies I told you of: one of them, at least, is at work; and one of the sins you have to repent of is this unbelief: for hath not the Friend of Sinners said, 'Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out?' John vi. 37. Does he not also complain, 'Ye will not come to me that ye might have life?' John iv. 40.

"But what," you may ask, "is *coming* to him?" I answer, it is trusting in him according to his word. As it is written, 'He came unto his own, and his own received him not; but as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in his name:' John i. 11, 12.

"And how," you may ask, "shall I be able to do this?" I answer, pray in Christ's name for the Holy Spirit, as your promised guide and comforter; and again remember who hath said, 'If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him:' Luke xi. 13.

Now, having shown you your worst Enemies, and your best Friends, the path of Victory lies before you; of which let me speak a few words.

The TRUE AND REAL VICTORY is that, which does not mock a man. Wicked men are permitted to have success for a time, but their short-lived victory only adds to their shame and punishment.

Suppose the French could land upon our shores and take a few villages or a town on the coast, they would probably dance, and vaunt, and sing of victory till you came up; but when they fell a sacrifice to their rashness, their late victory would only bring bitter reflection. Yet this is but a faint picture of many profane boasters, who will awake at death to everlasting remorse, after being mocked here with short-lived victories!

But a real Christian knows of a Victory of a more high and lasting nature; and, in sight of death, can say, with the Apostle, 'Thanks be to God which giveth us the Victory through our Lord Jesus Christ:' 1 Cor. xv. 57. This is a Victory, which never mocks the Christian Soldier: for, after conquering other enemies, he conquers Death itself. He may say, without fear of disappointment, 'I have fought the good fight: I have finished my course: I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness:' 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.

The Bible is the Book of Victory. But the time

would fail me if I were to tell you of those Soldiers of God recorded in it, who, 'through faith, subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, and turned to flight,' as I hope you will do now, 'the armies of the aliens:' Heb. xi. 33, 34.

But I pray you recollect, that, when the Apostle tells of the great things which they did, he also tells us again and again *how* they did these great things; namely, by *faith*, that is, by *confidence in their* FRIEND.

"But," perhaps you will say, "these are things of old time."

Indeed and in truth, my good friend, they are the things of *every* time; for God hath never left himself without witness. Have I not just told you of a Soldier now living, who is a man of the very same stamp with those of old time? I know others, and have heard of many more, who have gotten the True Victory.

After I had written you this letter, I received an account of one of these who is lately dead. I will give you a short extract from it.

James Ruddy was born in Ireland. He had served in the East Indies, and was afterwards appointed to the garrison at Hull. His health having declined apace through intemperance, it pleased God to impress his heart with a sense of his dangerous condition as a sinner.

Do you ask what is meant by this? I say such thoughts as these came into his mind:—"What if I have been true to my King and Country, have I not lived a rebel against the King of Kings? Have I not broken his law—joined his enemies—and despised his

mercy? How shall I meet him in judgment? Where will my poor soul be, while they bury my body with military honours?—shut up in darkness, pain, and disgrace!"

In this way he passed many a heavy hour; till he sent for the worthy Chaplain of the garrison, who has published the account.

By his faithful Minister, he was led to the knowledge of his Almighty Friend, and taught all that I have been endeavouring to teach you.

Burdened as he had been by guilt, he now began to lay hold on the promises of the Gospel. He became resigned to his afflictions, yea thanked God for them. He spoke of his former sins with abhorrence; and earnestly exhorted his former companions in sin to repent and turn to God.

He would listen to none, whose conversation tended to puzzle and unsettle him; but was very thankful to those, who helped and edified him.

He showed an affectionate concern for his wife; commending her to God, and praying for her Salvation.

He was neither impatient of suffering, nor afraid of dying; but was comforted and supported with those views which carried him beyond the grave, and, in triumphant confidence, he often repeated, that as soon as his breath should leave the body, his spirit would be present with the Lord.

When his disorder increased so much that he could converse no more with men, he conversed with his Saviour in fervent prayer; by whom he was supported, till a period was put to his sufferings on the last day of the year 1797.

And now, Soldiers, let me ask thee, Is there any Victory like this? Others only hope to conquer one

Enemy; but this man conquered *all*. Others only hope to conquer while they live: but this man conquered most gloriously when he died. Death to him was but passing from a conflict to a crown. The victory of others gains but a *mite*, and lasts but for a *moment*; but this man won 'a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory:' 2 Cor. iv. 17.

Before I conclude this letter, and as I never may have an opportunity of speaking to you again, I beseech you seriously to reflect that God has now brought that truth to your mind, by which you must one day stand or fall before his bar: I mean that important truth which I wish you to be convinced of before it is too late; namely, that you are a perishing sinner on the brink of Eternity—that your help is not in yourself, but in Christ, to whom I have been directing you for pardon, peace; and complete Salvation. He alone can give you a *new heart* and a *right spirit*, that you may henceforth live like a Christian, and no more return to folly. Whoever *carries* the truth to a man, it is God that *sent* it. And the truth that does not save a man, will be a witness against him.

"But," say you, "can such a man as I hope to obtain the same victory?"

Why not?—The same friend by which the men I have been telling you of, gained their victory, is now calling you to 'look unto him and be saved:' Is. xlv. 22.

Every one of them that are saved was as far from salvation once as you can be now.

But it began with a SERIOUS THOUGHT; such as, "What am I about?—What shall I do in the end thereof?—How shall I meet death?—How shall I stand in judgment?—How shall I endure the sentence, 'Go ye cursed into everlasting fire?'"

This went on to a HOLY DESIRE; such as, "O wretched man! who shall deliver me? Oh that I could return to that God whom I have offended—Oh that I might have his favour!"

It then proceeded to a SECRET PRAYER; such as, 'God be merciful to me a sinner—Teach me thy way, O Lord!'

And all the rest, which you have heard of, followed in them as a fruitful tree rises up from a little seed, or as a Church begins with a single stone.

The man, that looks to Heaven for help, should despair of nothing. The 'battle' then 'is not ours, but God's:' 2 Chron. xx. 15, being confident of this very thing, that he, which hath begun a good work, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ: Phil. i. 6.

Go forth then, Soldier, in the strength of the Lord, and in the power of his might; and you shall join those conquerors who are now singing an eternal song of Victory. In the mean time I will leave you a verse or two of the CXLIVth Psalm; and may God the Holy Spirit enable you to sing it with grace in your heart!

For ever blessed be the Lord,
My SAVIOUR and my SHIELD:
He sends his SPIRIT with his Word,
To arm me for the Field.

When Sin and Hell their force unite,
He makes my Soul his Care;
Instructs me to the heav'nly Fight,
And guards me through the War.

A FRIEND and Helper so divine,
Shall my weak Courage raise:
He makes the glorious Vict'ry mine,
And his shall be the praise.

REASONS FOR REPOSE,

ADDRESSED TO A CHRISTIAN SUBJECT TO TEMPORARY ALARMS RESPECTING THE TRUTH OF THE SCRIPTURES.

Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you. . . . 1 Pet. iii. 15.

Feb. 18, 1804.

DEAR MADAM:

I SUSPECT that much of the depression which you mentioned to me lately, proceeds from the present relaxing season. You are nervous; and have been of late much confined to your house. Solitude, also, as well as society, has its peculiar temptations. Probably Mr. ——, professionally engaged with his wonted energy, would smile at the apprehensions which disturb his wife, though he feels equally interested in the subject before us. But, certainly, there is something more than nerves and seasons to be considered, with respect to the minds of pious persons occasionally harassed with infidel objections. I spoke, indeed, only what occurred at the moment, in reply to your difficulty: yet, as you tell me that you received benefit from my observations, and now wish for the substance on paper, I will endeavour to recollect what I then said.

I remember to have begun by remarking, that the religious world has not been sufficiently instructed in the *Evidences* of Revelation; or, as to the ground on which thinking men receive the Bible as the Word of God. Young converts are so affected with the discovery of their lost condition, of the importance of salva-

tion, and of the Scriptures as their only rule, that they are for proceeding as soon and as fast as possible. If they can but build rightly on the *foundation*, they have no question as to the foundation itself. And, indeed, if this foundation should never be called in question *afterwards*, all would be well; but I feel convinced that something more than an *implicit* faith is necessary here: a merely traditional adherenre to Scripture lies too much exposed to assaults, especially in such an age as this—an age, in which one can scarcely take up a daily print, or pass an hour in company, without meeting some remark which has a tendency, more or less, to sap the ground on which we stand.

I myself was once a professed infidel: that is, one who, carried away first by the love of sin, hoped the Bible might not be true. I then listened to such as were hardened enough to assert that it was not true: till, at length, I believed my own lie; and the vanity of appearing something like a philosopher, who had thrown off the traditions of the nursery, set me on propagating that lie. But when, like the prodigal, 'I came to myself,' I had many painful steps to tread back, and many difficult and intricate paths to retrace. I now wished that the Bible might be true, and was glad to receive help from any able guide who had written on its evidences. Grotius, Bishop Butler, and many others helped me to see, that he, who is acquainted with the evidence which God has annexed to his word, has not only every thing he can reasonably require, but that, as Mr. Soame Jenyns has remarked, he will find *it requires more faith to be a consistent Infidel than to be a Christian.*

But you ask, "Do you never feel a shake after all this inquiry and experience?" I answer, Now and then an unexpected and malignant blast meets my

mind, and obliges me to have recourse to my usual method. Perhaps, after what I have known and felt, I ought to repel it instantly as a temptation. Perhaps, at my standing, I ought not to honour such an assault with any examination at all. But I am not telling you what may be my *duty*, but what is my *practice*. Moreover, such is the frame of my mind, that I fear no other method than that which I take would satisfy it. As soon, then, as an alarm is given, I cast the eye of my mind over the leading evidences of the Scriptures, of which I have an habitual recollection, and which I need not particularize in their order to *you*. I likewise contemplate *facts* and *experience*, and soon obtain repose. Like a man who is told that the foundation of his house is in danger, I call for the key of the vaults on which my dwelling stands. I light a candle, walk down stairs, and pass very deliberately through the arches: I examine very particularly the arch suspected; and, after having satisfied myself that the foundation remains perfectly safe, I walk up again, lock the door, hang up the key, put out the candle, and quietly go about my business, saying as I go, "*They may raise an alarm, but I find* ALL IS SAFE."

"Have you had occasion," say you, "often thus to go down?" Not very often. "Did you always return satisfied?" Always. "Then be so kind as to mention some part of that train of thinking from which this satisfaction arises."

Were I, Madam, conversing with an avowed *Infidel*, it would be proper to bring forward a regular statement of the evidences of Revelation: but this will not be necessary here; especially as your present request respects only those considerations which generally satisfy *my own mind*.

I shall begin with informing you, that I cannot look

around me, without being struck with the Analogy observable in the works of God. I find the Bible written in the style of his other books of Creation and Providence. The pen seems in the same hand. I see it, indeed, write, at times, mysteriously in each of these books; but I know that mystery in the works of God is only another name for *my ignorance*. The moment, therefore, that I become humble, all becomes right.

I observe nothing coming from the hand of man like the Scriptures, in majesty of wisdom, in sanctity or simplicity: especially in marking the distinctions between right and wrong; and that too at a time when the most enlightened of the pagan world were confounding them. When I look into the theology of the heathen (that is of all without the light of Revelation) I find the greatest errors, and often the most extravagant fables, pervading their best systems: but, upon turning to the Bible, it seems to be said again, "LET THERE BE LIGHT." Here, alone, I find the true God: and discover his real character from his own declarations and dispensations. The altar raised to an "*Unknown God*" stands a monument of the blindness and wretchedness of the worshippers: But, in the Bible, I see 'Glory' is given 'to God in the highest; peace on earth' is revealed; and 'good will to men' so expressly points out the *means* of this peace, that, if these means were universally adopted, the present "Bedlam of the Universe" must be immediately changed into a happy state of order, truth, and love. Of this I can no more doubt, than I can doubt that I am at this moment endeavouring to recollect our morning conversation.

The Bible also contains the true history of man; so that there is not a word in his mouth, nor a thought in

his heart, but its Author knew them altogether. Well, therefore, might one say, "Give me a Bible and a candle in the deepest dungeon, and I will tell you all that is going on in the world." In this book only, I see the real character and deep malignity of that disorder in creation called *Sin*, fully exposed. I see also a holy law, by which it must be tried. I see the infinite worth of that soul of man, on which sin acts as a fatal poison. I am able to see so much of the eternal world, as to form a just estimate of the present. I am here taught my real *wants* and *resources*.—But what benighted views had the wisest among the heathen of these most important truths! Well might he say, "Either God must send a special teacher, or man must for ever remain in ignorance."

I see also in this Sacred Record, a Redemption or Recovery suited to my fallen state; and that in this recovery, God has not only consulted the need of his creature man, but also the honour of his own character and government. But, in his conducting of the concerns of an infinite government, I do not stumble at finding that 'God's thoughts' are not as 'my thoughts.'

I see the means of this recovery pointed out to man at his fall; and expressly held forth by *prophecy*, during a course of four thousand years: and that, by a succession of pious men, of various ranks, ages, and nations; and living under different dispensations; incapable, therefore, of *concerting* a plan, though perfectly harmonizing in their grand object. I cannot conceive how this harmony could be produced but by inspiration of God.

Such a union in prediction, and such exact correspondence in events, together with the fulfilment of the *other* predictions contained in this book, I view as a

STANDING MIRACLE to this day in proof of its inspiration.

We need not go to the New Testament to learn the history of Christ and his kingdom. An ancient record, scrupulously preserved through ages by his present enemies the Jews, foretells the time, place, and manner of his birth; the circumstances of his life, rejection, miracles, death, and resurrection! the subjects of his kingdom; its progress, opposition, and victory. Nor did this chain of prophecy close on his appearing; for he expressly declared what should follow on his gospel being rejected by the Jews: he gave an exact description of the overthrow of their Church and State; together with a declaration of the events of his own kingdom to the end of the world. Every other book is perfectly dark on these most important of all truths: but, on opening this book, by far the most ancient in the world, I see them all expressly set before me.

Nor is this grand event notified only by prophets. To keep alive and direct the expectation which had been raised, I observe a long train of emblems or types instituted. 'Shadows of good things to come' were kept up, and special tokens of the divine presence were afforded until SHILOH came, to whom it had long been predicted that 'the nations should be gathered.'

In the fullness of time I see SHILOH come. And I perceive the broad seal of heaven in 'signs, wonders, and mighty deeds,' set to his mission. So grand a design is worthy of such an attestation. Omnipotence could find no difficulty in producing it; and the witnesses are unimpeachable. Bad men could not invent such a *character* as Christ; good men could not attest *falsehood*. A number of pious and consistent witnesses could neither be deceived themselves nor deceive others, as to the facts which they had seen, which they re-

corded, and which they stood ready to seal with their blood. They could appeal to whole churches, as living witnesses of the continuance of this seal. Even the infidels of *that* day did not attempt to deny the facts, however absurdly they attempted to account for them.

Nor can I reasonably object to this knowledge as coming by the testimony of others: for has not God appointed that the greatest part of my knowledge can be received no other way, than by the report of competent and credible witnesses? I have no doubt at all of the existence of Rome or Constantinople; and yet what more do I know of these cities than by report? and what doubt have I of their existence? Cases of life and death are every day determined by the evidence of testimony. In the gospel history, and in the effects following, I have all the evidence which the case admits, and all which an humble mind will require.

I find also this testimony attended with that *accidental* and *circumstantial* evidence, which attaches only to truth. A number of simple witnesses state facts, many of which had passed in the presence of multitudes as well as of themselves. They make no comment: they court no prejudices: they conceal no feelings: they obviate no probable objections. They also maintain this testimony, not only without a single worldly motive, but against all worldly hope.

I perceive the reverse of this in the opposers of the truth. From that day to this, art, malignity, falsehood, and an evident hatred to the humble and holy principles of the Gospel, appear on the very face of their opposition. And yet I can gather honey from the carcases of these Lions. *Josephus*, the Jew, and *Tacitus* the Pagan, confirm the history of Christ, and the fulfilment of his prophecies. *Suetonius* and *Pliny*, *Celsus* and

Porphery, while they pursue their secular projects, and occasionally express their malignity against Christianity, confirm the very facts on which I build my hope. Such is the uniformity of truth that it derives evidence from its very opposers.

Besides this diversity of evidence arising from such opposite characters, I cannot but know the astonishing moral change which took place in a great part of the world; and that it took place upon setting forth the character, teaching, miracles, passion, and resurrection of Christ. This is another standing monument of truth and its victories. The strong-holds of pride, prejudice, policy, power, and philosophy, were pulled down —by what? By arts or arms? by carnal policy or worldly prospects? No. The 'weapons of this warfare were not carnal, but spiritual;' yet I see them 'mighty through God to the pulling down these strong-holds.' I see them doing this, not only in barbarous nations; but in the most enlightened on earth; not only the poor and illiterate acknowledged and died for the truth, but men of eminence and science could not resist its evidence; and therefore declared, that 'what things had once been gain to them, they now counted loss for Christ.'

As it is evidently the design of Revelation to recover an alienated creature to his God, so I am penetrated with the Wisdom and Grace discovered in suiting the means of recovery to the apostacy of fallen man. The scripture method of recovery accommodates itself to man, as he *is;* not, as he might have been. It comes down to his state and case, however desperate. It aims, by every means to win his heart, as well as to alarm his conscience. Man, like Adam, flies from the voice of his God to some hiding-place, but the voice follows him: 'O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me

is thy help.' Sotish Man would stop his ears to the voice of his friend; but 'God thundereth marvellously' in them. He falls among thieves; but the Good Samaritan pities him, binds up his wounds, and provides for his wants. He is still prone to wander like a silly sheep; but the Good Shepherd restores him, and 'beseeches him to be reconciled.' The offer of such a friendship confounds him: he feels troubled at the strange proposal—

"Dwells in all Heaven Charity so dear?"

the Good Shepherd layeth down his life to prove it.

When I contemplate the authentic and unbroken channel, through which this Sacred Record is brought to my hand; the various translations which have preserved it entire from the first ages; its marvellous preservation under every attempt to destroy it; the jealousy of opposite sects, watching over each other on any attempt to corrupt it; the attestation of its bitterest enemies to all its important facts, corroborated by *their* character, as well as that of its friends and adherents; when I regard the rites and ordinances set up at the time to commemorate those facts, and which stand as monuments recording them to this day; when I behold the present state of the Jews, and mark their still obstinate adherence to that very record which has so long and so expressly foretold the state in which I see them—I say whenever I contemplate these particulars, I feel overwhelmed with evidence: I say to myself, "'The word of the Lord is tried: a cunningly devised fable' will stand no such test." And I am, by necessity, brought to the following dilemma:—Either that 'this record is true;' or, that it must be strangely determined, in providence, that 'the sincere and diligent seeker of truth shall inevitably be deceived.'

But I cannot for a moment admit the latter supposition: for I dare not think of God but as holy, just, and good; and as 'a rewarder of those who diligently seek him.' But to suppose that He, who foresees, directs, and governs every event, would concur in the propagation of a plausible lie; that this lie should be attended with strong and various evidences; that it should be so like a ray from heaven, a light shining in a dark place, a balm to the wounded, a direction to the humble inquirer, and a way of holiness to the ungodly—to suppose, I say, that God would permit all this, in full view of its deceiving the seeker of truth, and mocking and disappointing those who desire above all things to serve and glorify Him! verily, such a supposition tends to blasphemy! it supposes the Most Holy to act like a demon! and it implies that infidels and profligates are the only children of light and liberty! Some object to mysteries: but what mystery in the Bible is to be compared with that, which must follow on such a supposition?

I see, at this day, the very opposers of the Gospel stand among the proofs of it. The vagrant and stumbling *Jew*—the supercilious *Greek*—the disputatious *Heretic*—the sneering *Infidel*—the loose *Professor*—all these become involuntary witnesses that the Author of this Book is a searcher of hearts. He has expressly written their history, and accurately drawn their characters, before they were born; and, were not such characters afterward to appear, the Scriptures would be unintelligible.

I find some simple believers in danger of being overborne by the insolence, with which the men of this world treat the counsel of God, and those who fear him: a blind majority alarms them. They are not aware, also, how plausibly an artful sophist can darken and confound the clearest evidence. For my part, I see

only what might naturally be expected. Would it not be strange if these birds of night did not hate the morning? if they did not endeavour to shut out its beams? Was I not one of them? Am I not in their secret? Did I not once speak as they do now? and, do I not know the reason?

"Whatsoever is received," says the old maxim, "will be received according to the nature of the recipient." He, that feels his guilt and danger, will be ready to say, "This Gospel is what I needed, but could not have contrived; but, being revealed, it exactly suits my case." Thus 'the hungry will be filled with good things,' while 'the rich will be sent empty away.' This pillar of fire and cloud, which brings light and shade to an *Israelite*, occasions darkness and destruction to an *Egyptian*. The Gospel becomes a trial of men's spirits; and, by it, 'the thoughts of many hearts are revealed.' The man, who loathes his dungeon, will gladly take this Lamp, and explore his way to liberty; while another, who loves his bondage, will only dispute or slumber by it.

It is as impossible for me to doubt that 'light is come into the world,' as to doubt that of which I have daily proof, namely, that 'men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.' I plainly see the reason why the Bible is not universally received with joy. How mean a revelation, compared with the Scriptures, would that be, which could teach men how their present propensities might be gratified! and yet a book that could point out this, would soon be translated into *all languages*, and find its way over the *whole earth*.

The confined reception of truth is the *natural result* of the extent of human depravity. I have a clear conviction, that spiritual Food, Medicine, and durable Riches are freely proposed to a multitude wherever the Gospel comes: but some of them will not so much as hearken

to the proposal: some just venture to touch and taste it, as if they suspected it would poison them. I see this continually. And yet while I see this, do I not also see this very same multitude ready to flock round every vile mountebank who solicits their attention? They will not only hearken to *his* rant, but throw up their shillings for his packets, and swallow them, nothing doubting. 'Who hath believed our report?' complains a prophet: or, in other words, Who will not believe any one—except his true and only infallible Physician?

But, notwithstanding the prevalence of this kingdom of darkness, I see also a 'kingdom of heaven,' not only *foretold*, but actually *set up*, in this world. Time, which has swept away in their turn other ancient governments, has, from the days of Abel the righteous, to this day, witnessed a righteous and permanent Kingdom established in the hearts of the faithful; one, exactly of the same nature, and producing the same holy effects, in whatever age or nation it has been set up.—Nothing fundamental has ever been changed in it; and its new form, under Christ, is but the flower or perfection of the whole dispensation. Even now may we say, 'Go and tell' every serious inquirer, that, in this Kingdom, the morally 'blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them; and blessed is he who shall not be offended' at the Author and the means. Nor does it need a moment's consideration, to determine whether these *moral* miracles, wrought on the immortal spirit of man, be not far more important than those *physical* ones, which were once wrought on his perishing body.

I feel no disposition to stumble at the mysteries of Revelation till I forget myself. He, who ventures beyond his depth, must be drowned. There are some

truths in my own affairs, which, however I state them to my children, must appear to them strange and incredible: could they be presented to the intellect of a fly, they must appear much more so. There is, however, some proportion between the intellect of a man and that of a fly; but no proportion at all, between that which is *finite* and that which is *infinite*. In viewing, therefore, the scheme of redemption, I seem like one viewing a vast and complicated machine of exquisite contrivance: what I comprehend of it is wonderful; what I do not, is perhaps more so still.

I have repeated proof, that, in venturing into the presumptuous path of the first Adam, I soon lose myself in disorder and darkness; but, in following the lowly footsteps of the second Adam, I find the *Way*, the *Truth*, and the *Life*.

Nothing appears to me more extravagant than the folly and madness of that man, who can trifle with considerations on which his eternal interests depend. He *must* soon quit his hold of present things: he *must* soon enter another world: the grand question therefore is, does any thing present itself like footing in the abyss before him? Can a floating atom adhere to any thing like substance? I see one ground of hope only, on which I can venture; and could I be deceived in the attempt, I should be but as others. Like the dove, therefore, which 'went to and fro, but found no rest for her foot till she returned to the Ark:' so, after trying other means of rest I am reduced from necessity to flee to that only Rest and Refuge set before me in the Gospel.

I observe a sort of evidence of the truth of Christianity, which none but a Christian can have, and which partly depends upon a moral *Taste*. Like a man who has an ear for music, a Christian will perceive harmony and sweetness, where another, who has not

this taste, will find nothing but noise. When a multitude were gathering to drag the Apostle to prison for preaching the truth, an individual receives and obeys this truth as the means of salvation. How is this? Had she a better understanding than the rest? No such reason is given: but it is said that 'the Lord OPENED HER HEART, that she attended unto the things that were spoken of Paul.' Verily, we must know that 'there is a path which the Vulture's eye hath not seen, and which no' such 'fowl knoweth:' and, what seems more extraordinary, we know that such cannot, or will not, see this path, after all imaginary pains have been taken to show it to them.

A Christian has also evidence of *Experience:* like that of a man, who has long dwelt in a house which another has only walked round, and examined on the outside. The external observer may question whether any thing is to be found in the house at which he looks; but it is much too late for *us* to doubt, who have long inhabited the dwelling: *we* cannot UNKNOW what we have known: *we* cannot but have the clearest conviction, that, till we were brought into this house, we were destitute of the shelter, provisions, and comforts which we now enjoy, and of which we are so desirous that others should be partakers. Now, though this, as well as some of the before-mentioned arguments, cannot properly be urged on the conscience of an infidel, we certainly ought to take the benefit of it to ourselves.

'Behold the days come,' saith the Lord, 'in which I will perform that good thing, which I have promised to the house of Israel.' Here I feel, that, if no one beside myself could be a witness of the fulfilment of this promise, I must be utterly abandoned to falsehood if I did not acknowledge the accomplishment of it in my own state and heart.

'Whatsoever doth make manifest is light:' but we have a conviction in our breasts, amounting to moral certainty, that it is only by the light of Revelation that we have been enabled to appreciate justly *other* things, and discern their true colour, worth, and importance. Instructed by this, we perceive, that if modern moralists reason better than their pagan forefathers, it is because they are born under a brighter day, and borrow from it those very assistances which their depravity often employs against it. We cannot but recollect that, when our hearts became humble, the light of Revelation, like that of the sun, brought its own evidence with it; insomuch, that, when Christ spake to us by his word, he seemed to say to us, as he once said to the man whose eyes he opened, 'I that speak unto thee, am He.'

The instruction, which a Christian receives from this great Teacher, makes all he sees *without* and feels *within* both natural and accountable; and his Teacher's counsel also shows him WHAT TO DO in the case. But, without such help, he feels like one driven out to sea without rudder or compass; and who, for any thing he knows to the contrary, may be dashed to pieces in a moment.

Necessity felt, and Help received, become an argument at hand with Christians in every station. Thus the believing poor feel the use and worth of the Scriptures as an illiterate Mariner feels the use and worth of his Compass. The Mariner, perhaps, has neither curiosity nor capacity enough to inquire why his needle takes a polar direction; or, what the learned have to say on its observed variations in different parts of the globe: he knows nothing of the laws of magnetism, why iron and not lead should be the recipient of it, when or by whom it was discovered, or to what variety

of purposes it may be applied; but this man knows, illiterate as he is, that it is by this needle only that he finds his way through a trackless ocean: he knows, that, by this alone, he has escaped many dangers, and obtained many deliverances: he knows he can proceed safely, only as he is directed by it; or take rest, only as he attends to it; and that it will bring him home to his family and friends at last. Thus the Poor take the benefit of Revelation, though they are not able accurately to maintain theories, nor answer questions respecting it, as a scholar might.

The value of a thing is sometimes best discovered by observing the effects resulting from the want of it. When I have beheld the desperate malignity of an unbeliever whom I have visited in his dying moments, and have seen him spurn at the only help and kindness that could be afforded him in such circumstances: or when I have laboured to convince a silly young creature, intoxicated with vanity, sunk in sensuality, deaf to counsel, and plunging into ruin: when I say I have looked on such men, could I doubt for a moment as to what a reception of the Gospel would do for them? I stand assured that it would pluck a brand from the burning; that it would bring a madman to his senses; that it would change a devil into an angel. Can I doubt, after such an assurance, whether this same Gospel be true, and the appointed remedy of God?

Not that a bare assent to the letter of this divine record will produce any such effects. You and I, Madam, know too many who believe the History of the Bible as firmly as they believe the History of England, and with much the same effect. Such a faith as this will only witness against them. There needs a Teacher, as well as a Book; an influence as well as a light. "The gospel," as one observes, "is a mighty engine for

raising the fallen nature of man; but God must have the working of it."

But, whatever use man makes of this standard of truth, the standard itself remains fixed, tried, and unimpaired. When I take down a great author, such as Lord Bacon, I find that time has discovered many errors, and rendered obsolete many positions, to be found in that most comprehensive of human minds. But I see that Time can take nothing from the Bible. I find it a *living* monitor. I feel convinced that I might have escaped all my errors through life, had I paid attention to its admonitions. Like the sun, it is the same in its light and influence to man *this day*, which it was ages ago. It can meet every present inquiry; it can console under every present loss: and it can become, in God's hand, a daily exciting cause of growth and comfort.

But on the supposition that we had not such firm footing for our hope and comfort as has been stated; yet even then, a man, who was not tied and bound by depraved habits or inveterate prejudices would surely avoid the edge of a precipice. He would say, "In order that I may not make a mistake which cannot afterwards be rectified, I will keep as far as possible from danger. It surely becomes me to act in matters of the *last* importance with the precaution which I use in matters of the *least* importance. In matters of such moment, I must avoid even *hazard*."

'Fools make a mock at sin:' but sin appears, from experience as well as from the Scripture, to be an infinite evil. I see it now convulsing the nation. I am shocked at its cruelty and outrages as I pass the streets. It deranges my family. It disorders my worship. It pollutes and torments my heart. I can form, indeed, no right judgment how it may become infinite

justice to treat this evil; but I can take the JUDGE'S OWN ACCOUNT. I can take warning when he declares repeatedly that he will bring the impenitent to a state 'where the worm dieth not and where the fire is not quenched.' I can take divine counsel how to avoid these awful consequences. I can take the *safe side:* and in so doing I am sure of losing nothing, even if it could be proved that I should gain nothing.

We cannot avoid perceiving a distinct class of men, who, from the beginning of time, were taught and disposed to serve the living and true God: we cannot help marking the *identity* of their character, and the *superiority* of their views; their zeal for truth and their daily anxiety to improve under its direction. Nor can we avoid perceiving the rest of mankind drowned in cares or pleasures; either casting off all fear of God, or becoming the blind dupes of some contemptible superstition. Nor can we hesitate a moment to which of these two divisions of mankind we should join ourselves!

As a foolish youth, who knows not how to prize the privileges of his father's house, care, and counsel, seeks the friendship of some dangerous stranger: thus, on taking umbrage at something met with in the Church, I have petulantly walked into the World for relief. Happy for me! what I met there soon convinced me that I must make the best of my way back again. I found hypocrisy and farce in the Church: in the World I found nothing else; and pure truth and solid consolation, only in the Bible.

Happy also for us, if by any means we are brought to receive the truth in time. On my first coming into our neighbourhood, one, who possessed a considerable estate in it, was not satisfied with jocosely expressing his own infidelity, but thought he complimented me by insinuating, that, secretly, I was of his sentiment. A

mortification in his bowels soon after made him serious, and *then* he discovered his fatal mistake. He sent for me in the greatest anxiety, but too late for conversation. The agony, however, of his mind when dying reminded me of that observation, "*Hell is truth seen too late.*"

And is this all that the god of this world can give his servants for believing his lie? One thing more perhaps, he may add:—the *opiate* of a stupid conscience to make them die quietly. But I cannot be content with such wages. Annihilation, which is the Unbeliever's *best* hope, is the Christian's *worst* fear. He alone stands a candidate for an enduring *substance*: the Bible alone purposes it: and what has the world to offer, in its sophistries or satisfactions, which should dissuade him one moment from thus standing?

On the other hand I see a wild fanatic mangling the Scriptures till some are ready to call them in question: but I see no question arise from hence. Had this deluded creature ceased to follow his imagination, and trod the humble and practical path of his guide, he would have ceased to be a fanatic.

Nor am I a whit more stumbled at the hypocrite. Like Simon Magus, I see him paying homage to excellence, while he has 'no part nor lot in the matter.' Like a spurious miracle, he derives all his credit from those that are true; as a counterfeit coin or note would deceive none, if true had never existed. "Tell me not," said your old friend Mrs. —— to her relation, "how many hypocrites you find in the Church. I tell you I know I am not one myself; and that is enough for me."

To set before you the objections which have been made to Revelation, and the satisfactory answers which have been repeatedly given and are in every body's

hands, would be but to trifle with your time. And, indeed, were not such solutions at hand, we know that a well-founded fact is not to be overthrown, because objections may be started against it, which we are not prepared to answer. Many of us, who have been objectors, know also that the 'carnal mind, which is enmity against God,' lies at the root of such objections; and that those, 'who receive not the love of the truth,' are in the way to be punished with that 'strong delusion of believing a lie.'

> Hear the just laws, the judgment of the skies!
> He, that hates truth, shall be the dupe of lies.
> And he, that *will* be cheated to the last,
> Delusions, strong as hell, shall bind him fast.

In this way, Madam, has God enabled me hitherto to examine my foundation. Or, if I may be allowed at the conclusion to change the metaphor, I stand like one who, for a long time, has been imposed upon by toys and tinsel; but, at length, feels satisfied that he has found *gold*. Some, indeed, try to persuade me that I am still imposed upon, and that what I take for gold is but base metal. I therefore proceed to prove my gold by every method of trial which I can devise: I put it into the *scale:* I try it in the *fire*: I bring it to the *touchstone:* I place it under the *hammer:* and I find it still *pure gold*. After all this, shall I regard their cry who have never *thus* tried it; and whose fears and lusts oppose the trial?

At your request, I have now put down the substance of my unconnected remarks; and since, in that form, they afforded you relief in *discourse*, I have avoided giving them a more regular one in *paper*. I have also been sparing of practical inferences from the truth thus established; as I need not demonstrate to You, what

Reasons for Action must necessarily arise from these *Reasons for Repose*. You are also fully aware that the Truth before us must be infinitely momentous, or nothing: that it cannot be *nothing*, we have full proof in our own breasts: infinitely momentous therefore it must remain, and such may we ever feel it!

But, after all these considerations, I cannot expect *you* will ever have so strong a conviction of the energy of divine truth as our venerable friend Mr. N——, or as myself. Like the demoniac *Legion*, we must needs sit with more admiration in our right minds at Christ's feet, than Lydia did. Yet I feel comfort in speaking to a Christian on this subject, since we can both, like David, 'enter in the Sanctuary' in order to clear up our doubts, and behold the end of those who will not follow us thither. We have 'the witness in ourselves,' when a mist, like that which lately overspread your mind, does not rise to obscure it. For, whether the world will believe it or not, we know there is such a thing as a *Common Sense* among the real disciples of Christ—a heart-felt conviction and experience of the truth of the Gospel. We know that nothing did us good till we received that Gospel: that, till then, we had no well-grounded hope in view of affliction, death, and judgment. I must repeat the term *well-grounded*, because an *ill*-grounded confidence is worse than none at all.

With a mind fully made up on the subject, 'all the days of my appointed time' I hope to 'wait till my change come.' Such a change we all know must soon take place in every one of us; but a strange infatuation leads fallen man, like one walking in his sleep toward a precipice, to plunge into the abyss before him, without so much as inquiring whither he is going, or how he may go safely. On the contrary, as one *awake*, I would anticipate the change before it takes place: I

would provide against it: I would descend to the grave, taking hold of the Almighty Hand stretched out for my help: crying, as I descend, 'Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which Thou hast caused me to hope.'

Till then, as we cannot but pity such as slight these Results of our Inquiry, so let us also pray for them; endeavouring, by every step in our conduct, still further to demonstrate the *more excellent way*. And permit me to add, that, till then,

I must remain, Dear Madam,

Your affectionate Friend,

And faithful Servant,

R. C.

A FRAGMENT,

WRITTEN IN AN ILLNESS, IN THE YEAR 1799.

As a traveller, who has left his house but a few hours, finds himself in an entirely new situation; so, shut up for a few hours in a sick bed, and with a prospect of death, I look backward and forward, and seem in a new world. I feel the truths which I have taught, in a way I never before felt them. I marvel at the stupidity of man, and most of all at my own stupidity. I desire to live, only that I may live and act under the impressions that I now have, as I clearly perceive nothing else worth living for.

I just now called for one to help me, who would go through fire and water to do it; but received no answer. What a mercy that *He*, who always can help me, always hears me when I call!

I feel many sweet and strong ties to the present life, in my family and in my Church, to which all earthly possessions bear no comparison; yet 'to depart and be with Christ is' doubtless 'far better.' But I have been this morning perplexed with the consideration, that when I 'shall see him as he is,' I shall not be able to forgive myself for not having served him better. I know not how to separate the idea of self-reproach from heavenly enjoyment.

Our three grand enemies are the World, the Flesh, and the Devil: but we are sure to conquer; for

'greater is he that is in us, than they that be against us!'

Sitting in my blankets, with this Bible before me, I seem like old Elwes with a bushel of bank notes and India bonds; but with this difference, that he must have his all taken away, and I shall take all mine with me.

I am astonished, and even confounded, when I recollect with what prodigality we Ministers are accustomed to waste our time. A Minister spending his strength and talents merely to entertain his acquaintance, is a 'Foolish Virgin' wasting her oil to light up a puppet show. I purpose, in the strength of God, that the few drops which I have remaining, shall be consecrated to the lighting of wanderers to the Door, or pilgrims on their Way.

The moment my soul departs from this body, it will be more separate from the present world in which I live, than if it were at this instant placed beyond the orb of Saturn; and yet, at the orb of Saturn, what a mere non-entity would this present world be! But, to be placed at such an inconceivable distance from my present station, and to be there *alone*, though out of absolute pain, shocks the mind: on the other hand, to be there, or any where else, under a sense of divine favour, and with the presence of Christ, makes that state no *solitude*, and this world no *loss*.

I have had a view, in my sickness, that I never had before; respecting those Opiates which have kept me in a doze at least, where I ought to have been broad awake. Arts and sciences, literature, curiosities, news, and even nonsense, have wasted hours and days; and that, while I had a most important charge to be executed, and a soul to be prepared for this season. I see all this with a clearness that fills me, at once, with wonder,

indignation, and abasement. Should I live, ought I not to proclaim it upon the house top? and especially to those who are dosing to this hour?

When *He* said to me, by the physicians, 'Set thy house in order, for thou shalt die, and not live;' and especially when one of them told me this with many tears; my soul, like a man suddenly overwhelmed with an inundation, looked about hastily, to examine the ground on which it stood to meet the unexpected trial. But the ground was found in a moment to be such, as could secure me from any flood; and I was enabled to reply, "My Dear Friend, you do not at all alarm me; for 'I know whom I have believed,' and 'I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him unto that day.'" But, in going home by myself in the coach, and looking from off the Rock on which I stood, to the waves which surrounded it, my calmness forsook me: I thought of my wife and children, and burst into tears: not that I doubted but they would be taken care of by him who had all my life taken care of me, but I could not bear the thought of parting with them, much less of leaving them in such a world. I thought too of my Church; and felt that I had not time left even to make such a settlement as that I could leave it with satisfaction. The whole was too much, and I was obliged to turn my eyes again from the waves to the Rock, and, for the present, transact with God for my own soul.

From having possessed great natural vigour, and a good constitution, I had strangely and preposterously imagined that I should live to be old: and have often pleased myself with a fond idea of discoursing to my congregation from St. John's pulpit, in a familiar, affectionate, and parental manner, with a head as white as snow. And this delusion had proceeded so far, that

almost took it for granted it would be so: and had imagined the sort of discourses which I should deliver at that time, with the tone of voice, and necessary imperfections! What upon earth, could make me so blind and forgetful of the nature of man, and the express admonition of our Lord? And this, too, after I had been *writing* "*Memoirs of the late Rev. Mr. Cadogan*," taken off in a few days at nearly *my own age*.

The Master had said, 'Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning.—And if he shall come in the SECOND watch, or come in the THIRD watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants.—Be ye therefore ready also, for the Son of Man cometh at an hour WHEN YE THINK NOT.' Strange delusion of my heart! I said, He will not come to me till the end of the *last* watch, therefore I have twenty years, at least to live. O my soul! hast thou been so long 'a Teacher of others, and teachest thou not thyself?'

How does nature, after all, overcome the best train of reasoning! After setting my house in order, with a prospect that my place at St. John's would be supplied by a better than myself, and that my wife and children would neither be forgotten in heaven or earth; I began to be quite composed, and to invent many reasons why it might be best to go at *this* time:—The Lord might see some evil coming on, from which I was to be snatched: I might fall into some snare, and dishonour the Gospel: above all, his will, his goodness, his promise would be a sufficient security for good, if he should take me *now*.—In the midst of this my little daughter Catharine came in, and pulling aside the curtain, asked me how I did. Her smiling countenance, unconscious of what a convulsion was taking place, awakened fresh and distinct sensations. I turned my eyes up-

ward, like Hezekiah, 'O Lord, I am oppressed: undertake for me!' Leave not that child a fatherless wanderer in such a world as this!"

O affliction! when sent to instruct, thou becomest a deep and faithful casuist! Of many past transactions and present habits, I said "It is NOTHING:" or, "It is SETTLED." Thou bringest the book again before me. What errors in the account! What blindness in the adjustment! Poor Bankrupt! I said I was 'rich, and increased in goods;' and behold I am 'miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.' Who is the man, that, in health and spirits, abounds in his own sense, and in self-satisfaction? He may, perhaps, live to learn that his God can make an affliction present such views in one day, as a whole life of contemplation and study would never have afforded.

Besides the encouragements and assurances given in the Scriptures to prayer, my own experience will stand a terrible witness against me, if I should ever cease to pray. I cannot allow myself to put down the remarkable answers which I have had to prayer, lest I should stumble the weak, or provoke the scornful. I know not when I ever prayed in earnest, that in one way or other, I had not satisfactory evidence that God heareth prayer. Ten thousand times hath he reproached unbelief by saying, 'Here I am—Why art thou fearful, O thou of little faith!' And, so strong is this evidence to me when I examine the detail, that I see and feel that he said it not in vain, 'If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what YE WILL, AND IT SHALL BE DONE UNTO YOU.'

I now feel capable of instructing myself in former periods, as if I were talking to a giddy child. I feel ready to seize the arm of the silly wanderer on this and that occasion: as one without a monitor or guide: and

of saving it from its mad projects and impoverishing habits. Who can estimate the value of such a monitor? But had I none?—Ah how superior a one had I at all times, to what I could now prove! O slighted Bible! I feel—I feel that every deviation from the right way, every foolish and wicked thing which I have said or done, has been owing to a disregard of thy counsel: every misery and mischief, into which I have fallen, has been through a neglect of thy warning! How true is that saying, in my own experience—'Oh that thou hadst hearkened unto me, then had thy peace been like a river!' What peace would now remain, were it not for the Gospel? The ignorance and unbelief of the multitude may cause them to pass it as a barren Rock;—I, like a traveller overtaken by a storm, am glad to flee to it and to be safe; and, entering in, I find honey, one drop of which exceeds the world's highest enjoyments.

If we say, with the Apostle, 'all things work together for good to them that love God,' we must not forget to take in the holy character of the great agent. What I mean is this:—I contend with my children on account of the evil that I see in them, but I often feel that I mean only their *good* in the correction. I do not think of the evil abstractedly as *evil*. But He, 'with whom we have to do,' will demonstrate to every conscience, soon or late, that his name is HOLY. He will bring forward to the conscience which he means to purify, its more refined as well as more gross offences. He will not only kill the cockatrice, but will crush its egg.

When at Bath, and in pain and weariness, I felt it would be a privilege to be dismissed from the arduous employment that lay before me; and wished some better Minister might take my place, while, with a small

income, I might retire to some village near town, where I might read and write as I could, in quiet and at leisure. All this is done: I *am* dismissed; and I may retire with a small competency, while a better man is ready to take my place. And now, like Rachel, I feel the loss of what I did not sufficiently prize! I feel, that, to pain and weariness, desolation and useless life, encumbering and encumbered, remains! O Lord, in mercy *withhold*, when I wish amiss, as well as grant that thou seest good, or I am undone!

To-day I would fain have assisted one, whose mind was perplexed with doubts; but soon found myself injured by speaking, and was therefore obliged to leave some things of importance unsaid. I trust I shall know, in future, the worth and design of speech, if ever I should be restored to it. Certain it is, that its failure brings a strong conviction of the abuse of this faculty. What an immense part of a short life has been wasted in idle, and sometimes injurious discourse! as if speech was given for nothing but to waste time and dissipate the mind. I will thank God for sickness, if I learn nothing more from it than this.

Pain makes me peevish: so trifles and peevishness add to the pain. Thus sin haunts and darkens the gloom of a sick chamber. On the other hand, I have repeated conviction, that as I recover a spirit of faith and prayer, I become patient; and light and comfort even under pain, return.

Old man, be quiet! I hoped thou wast *dumb* here, though not *dead*. Thy proud speeches and angry replies are here as ridiculous as depraved. Am I such a fool, that after being brayed in the mortar of affliction, I must still proclaim to every one that I am a fool? O Divine Spirit! affliction may bruise and kill me, but thou only canst make me wise and holy.

There are blessed moments in which the soul, by converse with Christ and his eternal Kingdom, has such views, that the whole world below seems but one noisy impertinence. I heard somebody, at such a moment, come and discourse gravely on the news of Bonaparte. It then seemed too trifling to be thought of; but I know, that, to-morrow, I shall be asking after Bonaparte. Blessed moment (not far off) when I shall behold His glory!

> And flesh and sin no more control
> The sacred pleasures of the soul.

What would not a wise man willingly endure in his body, that his mind might recover its true tone, and a right sense of things? We are all more or less moral lunatics and prodigals, and may be thankful for any dispensation, that leads us to 'arise and go to our Father.'

O 'Emanuel, God with us!' if I did not see thee thus come down to us, and visit thine apostate creatures, invite them to return, and consecrate by thy blood 'a new and living way,' I might think of God, but with no proper ideas,—no hope nor interest. I fear that I should only fear; and, standing as I now do on the brink of eternity, I should tremble to my inmost soul. Glory to thy name! I can now, not only honour, but *hope;* not only trust, but *love.*

I detect a delusion, which I put down, lest I should fall into it again. I have, for many years, been conscious, that whoever was by *Mr. By-ends,* I was not. I felt that I acted no part: I was deeply convinced of the truth of what I taught: I spoke from experience: I meant most sincerely what I said; and felt that my secret contrivances and plans were even more pointed and direct for the interests of men than the public. But

then, I so hugged this conscious integrity, that I allowed myself to play the fool—I allowed an unruly tongue to boast, to censure, and to complain. In short, this consciousness of honesty was to stand in the stead of the whole Law: and, like another Pope, grant dispensations to an indevout, unhumble, unwatchful, impatient, proud, and peevish spirit. My temptation was, "There goes a wolf in sheep's clothing! Thank God you are not like him. That is enough. It is no matter whether you are like Christ, and daily growing up into him in all things." Into such moral distempers many Christians fall: and from them nothing, I believe, but the special and express teachings of the Holy Spirit can deliver.

For a short space, I had a most lively view of the beauty and glory of Christ and his salvation. The 'Sun of Righteousness' arose on my soul 'with healing in his wings.' I felt not only a sense of pardon and peace, that exceeded all earthly joys; but was deeply convinced that all the pain I had suffered, through the late dispensation, was in order to humble, and purify, and prepare me for himself and his kingdom. I shed tears of joy, till a roving imagination brought a certain ignorant and conceited professor before me, with whom I entered into a dispute for a few minutes, which left my heart cold and dead. I perceived my loss, and made efforts to recover the former frame, but in vain. He seemed to say, "My visits must not be slighted."

'Return unto thy rest, O my soul:'—I feel this is the grand secret for obtaining peace, in a world of sin and sorrow. When the heart turns away from the confusions and disturbances to which it is continually exposed; and, taking wings, flies to the bosom of God:—when the voice of Christ, walking in the nig' on the troubled waters, is heard—'It is I, be not af

—This is peace! And this, too, is his own direction for obtaining it: 'In the world ye shall have tribulation; but, in me, ye shall have peace. Be of good cheer: I have overcome the world.'

After so many years of uninterrupted activity, to be imprisoned, to be silenced, and almost incapable of writing or reading, is more wearisome than even the pain that often accompanies it. And yet hence the following instruction may be gathered:

1. How much activity belongs to some natures; and that this nature is often mistaken for grace.

2. How much we are called to suffer, as well as do, the will of God. When I have bid one of my children sit down quietly, and remain silent during my pleasure, I enjoin him a much more difficult task than the most active service: and yet I expected it to be done, because I ordered it. How is it, that I have not yet learnt to sit still when I am bid.

3. While life is wasting, and souls are perishing, I may yet earnestly plead, with the Psalmist, 'Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name.' I may sing with the poet,

"My stock lies dead, and no increase
Does my dull husbandry improve:
Oh let thy graces, without cease,
Drop from above!

"Death is still working like a mole,
And digs my grave at each remove:
Let Grace work too, and on my soul
Drop from above!

"Oh come, for thou dost know the way;
Or, if to me thou wilt not move,
Remove me where I need not say
Drop from above!"

Lying on my couch at an interval of ease, I form a

project of some work: I trace the good effects which it ought to produce; and say to myself, *Why do we sit still till we die?* I start up, to find pen and paper; and, at the moment, my painful complaint arrests me afresh. While I, fainting, recline again, I seem to hear—"Know, feeble worm, that even God's work must wait for God's call, and time and strength."

I am shocked to think, that throughout my louring and threatening dispensation, I still am ready to kindle and explode when the temptation comes. Mr. Henry's remark on Abimilech, who wished his armour bearer to dispatch him, lest it should be said he died by the hand of a woman, may on other accounts be applied to me: —*Homo moritur, at superbia non moritur.*

The many mercies mixed with my pains, ought to strangle every peevish thought in its very birth. How am I surrounded with every thing that can meet and mitigate my case! What kind friends, with their sympathy and assistance!—What excellent supplies for my pulpit!—What intervals of ease!—What a Bible, full of directions and encouragements!—What opportunity for reflection and prayer!—What a prospect, after a short night of sorrow!—Complain with all these!—*Get thee hence, Satan!*

"Ah! my dear angry Lord,
Since thou dost love, yet strike:
Cast down, yet help afford;
Sure I will do the like.

"I will complain, yet praise;
Bewail, and yet approve:
And all my sour-sweet days,
I will lament and love."

TO THE

PARENTS OF THE CHILDREN

WHO ATTEND THE SCHOOLS FOR RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION,

AT ST. JOHN'S CHAPEL, BEDFORD ROW.

WHEN our Lord put the question, 'What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?' he showed the infinite worth of that soul, and also the awful consequences of neglecting it.

To make this more plain, he has given us a book, showing us, in a variety of ways, that the soul, like the body, has its *wants*, *diseases*, and *death*, and also its means of recovery of spiritual *health*, and eternal *life*.

This recovery is compared in Scripture to the bringing 'of a lost sheep back again to the fold;' or to one awaking from 'a deadly sleep to a lively hope:' as it is written, 'Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead; and Christ shall give thee light.'

NOW RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION is one of God's appointed means for this relief and recovery of the soul of man; as he saith, 'Take fast hold of instruction: let it not go, keep it, for it is thy life.'

More particularly with respect to our children, He says, 'Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.' And accordingly he charges us, 'In the morning to sow the seed of instruction, and in the evening not to withhold our hand, since we know not which shall prosper.'

'A brutish man knoweth not, and a fool doth not un-

derstand this' wisdom; and therefore despiseth it. But mark what honour the Lord putteth upon it, when he saith, 'Shall I hide from Abraham the thing that I do? For I know him, that he will command his children, and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord.—Them, that honour me, I will honour.'

And because religious instruction is God's usual method of delivering us from the *blindness* of ignorance and the *poison* of sin, He hath not only sent His Word, and promised His Spirit to them that ask Him; but he has also raised up Ministers and witnesses, from time to time, 'to open men's eyes, to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith which is in Jesus.'

But that religious instruction which is needful at all times, is particularly needful in a day of rebuke and blasphemy, like the present. A sort of madness now abounds, that leads guilty, dying creatures, not only to ridicule and reject both the physicians and the remedies which God hath sent to heal them, but also to delight in spreading the pestilential disorder.

Now if some cruel wretch were contriving to give your child a dose of poison under the notion of a sweetmeat, could you rest till the child was informed of the danger, and secured against it? Or if the plague were to break out among us, would you be easy till the best remedies were administered to your family, and every thing tried for their safety?

What then are we to think of those who are so anxious to secure the *body* of a child which must soon turn to dust, and yet slight the means which God has appointed for the safety of its never-dying *soul*?

None will need to have these things urged upon their

consciences the moment after they enter Eternity. But few consider enough how much, even in the *present* world, the comfort of the parent depends upon the religious instruction of his child.

How many, who have sowed the seed of religious instruction, are reaping the fruits of their labours in the piety, affection, and prosperity of their children! On the other hand what fruitless complaining and bewailing is often heard, over a profligate son, or a ruined daughter! And what bitter reflections must follow in the mind of those parents, who trace this ruin to their own neglect?

'I will judge,' said the Lord, 'the House of Eli for ever, because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.'

Consider the advantages of preparing your children against the time when they must leave you, to struggle with a dangerous world. Good principles form a suit of *armour*. They are also a *recommendation;* for who would not prefer a servant, or a partner, who has been brought up in the fear of God and the knowledge of his duty, to one who has been left to run wild, neither fearing God nor regarding man?

Consider, also, if they should be taken from you by death, how painful will be the reflection, if they meet it in ignorance and unbelief through your neglect! On the contrary, what a consolation it will be in parting with them, if, through God's blessing on your religious instructions, you have ground to hope that they are gone to Him.

Now, when to these considerations you add, that youth is the spring-time to plant good principles, before bad ones take root; and how much easier it is to prevent evils than to cure them; we trust that those, who have a *real* regard to the honour of God—to the souls

and bodies of their children—and to their own future peace and comfort, will embrace and further the pious design of their friends, whose only object, in their expense and labour, is to make you and your children happy in time and in eternity.

To attain this end, we would begin by setting before your children their fallen and depraved state by nature; and the root of those evil tempers and practices, by which they so dishonour God, distress you, and plunge themselves in destruction. We would teach them the nature of right and wrong, from the only infallible standard, God's holy law: a law, 'by which every mouth must be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God.'

After showing them their ruin by sin, we would teach them their remedy in the Gospel; setting before them the necessity of 'repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ;' the merit of his blood; the influence of his Spirit; and the obligations to a holy life and conversation.

But, while we, as their *friends*, are using our endeavours, how much stronger reasons have you, as their *parents*, to join us in bringing them, as you are able, to the knowledge of God and themselves!—leading your little ones (like those mentioned in the gospel, Mark x. 13,) by faith and prayer to Christ, that He may take them into His arms and bless them.

There are, indeed, parents so vain and unthinking, that they would be better pleased if their children were presented with baubles, articles of dress, money, &c., than with good books and religious instruction. On the contrary, your friends have far nobler views: they are seeking to adorn and enrich your children with those substantial benefits which can never be taken away from them.

You have already given good reason to hope that this also is your wish, from the great number of children who attend, and seem desirous of improvement in the best knowledge; and this hope will be greatly increased in proportion as you regard the following advice:

1. Show them the nature and excellency of our design.

2. Strictly enjoin them to be exact in attending at the appointed times, and to be attentive to the instructions given them.

3. Give them admonitions and directions at home, as to their behaviour in church, and in going thither and returning.

4. Encourage them to learn at home what they will be expected to repeat at church; and inquire at home what they have heard at church, and explain to them what may be too difficult for their present capacity.

5. Keep them, by all means in your power, from loose and vicious books and companions; and endeavour to correct evil dispositions, before they take root and resist all your efforts.

6. Frequently explain to them, and enforce upon their consciences, their ruined state by nature and practice—their redemption through Jesus Christ—and the necessity of the Holy Spirit's influence to make them see and feel these truths.

7. Enjoin upon them regularity in private prayer, and in reading the Word of God.

8. Pray for a blessing on your and our endeavours: 'for neither is he that planteth any thing, nor he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.'

9. Be watchful over your own conduct, that your example may not counteract our instructions.

10. Despair of nothing in a right way, and with the Divine blessing: 'Be not weary in well doing; for, in due season ye shall reap, if ye faint not.'

REGULATIONS OF THE SCHOOLS*

INSTITUTED AT ST. JOHN'S CHAPEL, BEDFORD ROW, FOR RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION. 1798.

GENERAL RULES.

I. THE *Support* of these Schools is by Annual Sermons only.

II. The *Instruction* of the scholars is committed to such Gentlemen and Ladies, usually attending this Chapel, as are approved of by the Ministers, and are nominated by them to be Superintendants of the scholars; which Superintendants are assisted by a Master and Mistress.

III. The *Government* of the Schools is vested in the Ministers, Chapel Wardens, and Gentlemen Superintendants; who hold a Meeting at the Vestry, the last Tuesday evening in every month, to regulate all matters connected therewith.

IV. The children who apply for admission must be able to read; and those are preferred, whose parents, or nearest relatives, usually attend this Chapel.

V. Children are admitted into the Schools at those Monthly meetings held on the last Tuesday in March, June, September, and December.

* These Regulations are here added, for the information of such persons as may wish to establish similar schools: though they were not drawn up by Mr. Cecil, yet they were submitted to his revision, and received his sanction. The Schools at St. John's Chapel contain, on the average, from 120 to 150 children; for whose accommodation the congregation erected two long galleries above the north and south galleries of the Chapel, one for either sex. J. P.

VI. An Annual Sermon is preached to the scholars on May-day; after which a Meeting is held of the Ministers, Chapel Wardens, and Superintendants, when books are given to the scholars of a value proportioned to their good behaviour during the year, and adapted to their age and capacity.

VII. Besides these Annual Rewards, other Rewards in books are given in February, August, and November, to the most meritorious Scholar in each class, such Scholar to be ascertained by the Report of the Superintendant to the Committee, at their preceding Monthly Meeting. Cheap Repository, and other small Tracts, are also provided annually for each Superintendant, to be given discretionally, as occasional rewards, among the deserving scholars. As the Children pass through the schools, they are furnished with proper Catechisms, and a Prayer Book, and, if they behave well and improve, with a Psalm Book, and a Bible; and, when they leave the schools, if they do it with credit to themselves, a larger Prayer Book and Bible are presented to them.

RULES FOR THE SUPERINTENDANTS.

I. They engage to attend every Sunday morning punctually at ten o'clock; or, in case of unavoidable absence, either to provide a proper Substitute for that morning, or to send notice the day before to the Messenger, that such a substitute may be provided in due time.

II. They are requested to bring forward the scholars committed to their care, according to the age and capacity of such scholars, in the following system of Religious Instruction:—The Collects for the day, the Texts

of the Sermons heard on the preceding Sunday: Dr. Watts' Divine Songs for Children: the Church Catechism: the Church Catechism broken into short Questions: and Stillingfleet's Explanation of the Church Catechism—and they are further desired to explain to the scholars, and impress upon them, the Truths of Christianity.

III. They are to inquire after the due attendance of the scholars on the preceding Sunday, by examining the printed Ticket of Attendance given by the Master or Mistress; and, if satisfactory, and they have attended that morning in due time, and repeated their lessons well, then the Superintendants are to give a printed Certificate of Approbation.

IV. The Superintendants are desired to propose Psalm Books and Bibles to those scholars who may not have received them, as rewards for their diligence; and to make a report in writing to every Monthly Meeting, of such scholars as have merited them. They are further desired to engage the attention and diligence of the scholars, by occasional presents of Cheap Repository and other small Tracts, a proper selection of which will be annually delivered to each Superintendant for that purpose.

V. They are empowered to suspend any scholar, for misdemeanors, from all connection with the Schools, till the next Monthly Meeting; to which they are to report the cause of such suspension; when the case is to be heard and determined.

VI. They are desired to begin with the scholars punctually at ten o'clock, and to leave them at ten minutes before eleven.

VII. When any scholar is absent two Sundays together, without a satisfactory reason being assigned, the

Superintendant is requested to send the Messenger to inquire the occasion of such absence.

RULES FOR THE MASTER AND MISTRESS.

I. THEY are to instruct all such children as are not classed under any of the Superintendants; and they have the same powers and duties with regard to such children, as are assigned to the Superintendants over theirs.

II. They are to collect the scholars together; to keep accurate lists of them; to regulate their behaviour during Divine Service; and to deliver to them Tickets for their attendance at each Service, if they behave well.

III. They may suspend any scholar for misconduct, after the school hours, reporting the cause of such suspension to the next Monthly Meeting.

IV. They are to employ such persons, with the approbation of any Monthly Meeting, as may be found requisite to assist in keeping perfect order and silence in the scholars' galleries, during Divine Service.

V. They are to be at the Chapel a quarter of an hour before ten every Sunday morning, and a quarter of an hour before service begins in the afternoon and evening.

VI. They are to collect at Midsummer, Michaelmas, Christmas, and Lady-day, all the TICKETS OF APPROBATION then in possession of each scholar, and return a certificate of the number; such certificate to be delivered by the scholar to the Superintendant, previous to the report by the Superintendant to the Committee for the rewards of May-day.

RULES FOR THE PARENTS.

I. THE children are to be brought for admission by their parents or friends; and no child is to be admitted, unless such parents or friends will engage for their good behaviour and punctual attendance.

II. Notice of the indisposition, or absence from town, of any scholar, is to be given by the parents or friends, to the Schoolmaster or Schoolmistress, that it may be reported to the Superintendant of such scholar's class.

III. As each scholar who attends and behaves well will have a TICKET OF APPROBATION in the Morning, and other Tickets certifying due attendance on each part of Divine Service; the Parents are particularly requested to call for a production of such Tickets immediately after each Service, the want of which will be occasioned only by absence from Church or ILL-BEHAVIOUR THERE.

IV. When a scholar has been suspended for misdemeanors, the parents or friends are to have notice of the cause, and are expected to accompany such scholar to the next Monthly Meeting, when the matter will be considered and determined.

V. They are expected to give notice to the Monthly Meeting when any scholar is to leave the schools.

RULES FOR THE SCHOLARS.

I. EACH scholar is to attend Divine Service every Sunday morning, afternoon, and evening, unless a sufficient reason can be given for absence.

II. All are to be in their proper places before ten every

Sunday morning, and before the bell shall cease to ring in the afternoon and evening.

III. Silence and reverence must be observed every moment they are in the House of God. There must be no whispering, talking, nor disturbance of any kind. Every little noise in the scholars' gallery disturbs the congregation in the gallery below. The first offence is punished by the forfeiture of all the tickets of approbation which the scholar may have then received. The second offence is punished by expulsion from the schools.

IV. Each scholar is expected to come straight from home to the chapel, and to go directly home after Divine Service is ended, with quietness and good behaviour. All playing and rudeness in the streets on a Sunday is disgraceful and sinful. The first offence is punished by the forfeiture of all the tickets of approbation which the scholar may have then received, and for the second offence the punishment is expulsion.

V. Boys and girls are never to be seen walking together on a Sunday to or from the Chapel.

VI. They are expected to pay cheerful and constant obedience to the Superintendants, Master and Mistress, and such persons as the Master and Mistress may appoint to assist in keeping order and silence in their galleries.

SERMONS.

THE TRUE PATRIOT.

And David said, What have I now done? Is there Not a cause?..1 SAM. xvii. 29.

INVITED as I am to address my fellow citizens, associated at this important crisis; and much as I must approve their zeal for the public safety, and still more that which leads them to present themselves this morning before God in his House of Prayer; yet I cannot but lament the *Occasion*. To meet every where peaceable citizens in arms! to hear fields and gardens daily echo with the din of martial exercises! Surely this bespeaks a time critical—alarming—new! a time, which a minister cannot but feel, and ought not to neglect. Far from my heart be that frigid indifference, which refuses to take an interest in what affects so many: 'For who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?'

But since, in times like these, it is of high importance first to *settle* our principles of action, and then to *pursue* them with firmness and vigour, I have selected an instance in the text, which, in both these respects, may stand as our example.

Israel had sinned: the scourge of an offended God was now suspended over them; and the Philistines gathered together their armies to battle. On this occa-

sion, an old Israelite had sent three of his eight sons to join Saul and the men of Israel; while the youngest, who had lately gone with his harp to relieve the troubled spirit of the king, was now returned to feed his father's sheep at Bethlehem.

'And Jesse said unto David his son, Take now for thy brethren an ephah of this parched corn, and these ten loaves, and run to the camp to thy brethren; and carry these ten cheeses unto the captain of their thousand, and look how thy brethren fare, and take their pledge. And David rose up early in the morning, and left the sheep with a keeper—and came to the trench, as the host was going forth to fight—and ran into the army, and came and saluted his brethren.

Here it was that he contemplated the approaching storm, which threatened to overwhelm his country. Here he saw the battle in array with fierce invaders, preceded by a champion whose stature and prowess were only to be equalled by his pride and blasphemy. He heard no terms proposed but absolute submission and slavery. He saw no face which was not blackened with fear; and, as the terror approached, Israel fled.

A holy indignation rose in the bosom of the young shepherd. A holy flame kindled within him, 'to take away the reproach from Israel.' Yet, considering what an obscure stripling he was, he could only speak by inquiries. 'What shall be done to the man that killeth this Philistine? Who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?'

'Jealousy is cruel as the grave; and who can stand before envy? Eliab, his eldest brother, heard when he spake unto the men; and Eliab's anger was kindled against David, and he said, Why camest thou down hither? and with whom hast thou left those

few sheep in the wilderness? I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thy heart; for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle. And David said, WHAT HAVE I NOW DONE? IS THERE NOT A CAUSE?'

That this was a *holy* flame which kindled in his breast, is evident from the *event*: that it was tempered with wisdom, may be gathered from the reply. He would hazard every thing in producing a unity of effort; nothing, that could tend to break it.

"'What have I now done,'" as if he had said, "that should provoke such bitter reflection? What have I now done, that I ought not to have done? If I am come down, is it not in obedience to my father's commands? If, when I came, I felt indignation at the blasphemies which I heard, is there not a cause for indignation? If I even feel and express my desire to withstand the enemies of my country and of my God in their impiety and rage—tell me, WHAT HAVE I NOW DONE? IS THERE NOT A CAUSE?"

These words of David suggest to us the following general remark for our consideration:—

EXTRAORDINARY OCCASIONS WARRANT EXTRAORDINARY EXERTIONS: IN WHICH, RIGHTLY TO ENGAGE, DISTINGUISHES THE GOOD CITIZEN AND THE CHRISTIAN.

Here it will be proper for us to inquire,

I. WHAT MAY BE DEEMED SUCH AN OCCASION.

To discuss this question in the abstract, were to trifle with your time: it is sufficient that I can produce such a matter of fact, as one should suppose would make an appeal to every man's bosom. If the present state of things be not such an occasion, he, who resolves to stand still till a greater presents itself,

will probably wait till the opportunity for exertion is passed.

Let me ask such an one (if such an one be present) —Had David before him an implacable enemy, making an attack upon the liberty, property, and religion of his country, and threatening it, 'If I prevail, then shall ye be our servants?' A haughty foe, glorying in his strength—defying God and man—and treating with scorn all resistance—spreading terror by his arms, and horror by his curses and blasphemies?—Had David, I say, such an one to meet? and need I attempt to PROVE to you that we are in similar circumstances?

Proofs of facts are impertinent and absurd, while every man is trembling and smarting under their consequences. This congregation can bear witness, that political discussion of every kind is a stranger to this pulpit. It is consecrated to the higher concerns of eternity. 'Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth!' Such strife shall have no consideration here, even on special occasions: nor shall I be intimidated by a term now so often misapplied. But, resolutely as we avoid politics, may we not consider FACTS?—facts, which involve all that is dear?—all that is sacred?

And what facts could I not produce? How closely could I run the parallel, between the enemy of Israel and the enemy of Europe? Did I say, what facts could not *I* produce? What facts could not every one of you produce? 'Who is such a stranger in Jerusalem that he knoweth not these things?' The principles and practices of our enemy have not only made 'the ears of every one that heareth them to tingle,' but will almost induce posterity to question whether the history of our times be a fact or a romance.

Tell me not *now* what errors, in the high or the low,

have accelerated the occasion. Who needs to be told that a course of sin and error is the history of fallen man?—that, when national sins arise to a certain height (especially under great privileges), national judgments will follow?—and that our errors are part of the punishment of our sins? The state of Israel proved it then, and the state of Europe proves it now; 'for sin is a reproach to any people.' But we are bound, as Citizens and as Christians, wisely to *meet* existing circumstances, as well as to deplore their *causes*. We are bound to regard the danger and the duties of the times in which we live: and we have a bright example* before us, in the conduct of David, who while he knew the cause, aimed to repel the effects. If, therefore, citizens now stand forth in arms against a spirit of universal depredation; if ministers now stand up, and are valiant for the truth against a dissolution of all principles, civil and sacred—'What have we now done? Is there not a cause?'

Still some will object.—More easy, indeed, is it to invent invidious objections with Eliab, than to feel a holy indignation with David. It is more easy to stand still, and say, 'Why camest thou hither? I know thy pride,' &c. than to take a sling and a stone, and make what efforts we can against an impending danger. It is still more easy to dart out a scornful and exasperating insinuation, than to meet it, like David, with recollection, and reply in 'words of truth and soberness.'

It has been objected, that war is inconsistent with the spirit of Christianity; and arms still more inconsis-

* If any objection arise to this example from what was peculiar in the case of David, let it be considered that the example is adduced only from what is common to him and to every good citizen; namely, his just indignation against an impious oppressor, and his active zeal for the peace and religion of his country.

tent, when found in the hands of private citizens. Wars of ambition or aggrandisement, of caprice or revenge, are certainly opposed to the spirit of Christianity, and 'he that THUS takes the sword,' may expect to 'perish by the sword.' If no other evil attend his undertaking, the very *principle* on which he proceeds is evil. I am ready to declare with a late ingenious writer,* that "If Christian Nations were nations of Christians, all war would be impossible and unknown amongst them."

But this question seems scarcely to come before us on the present occasion. I am now, not even contemplating, much less defending, what I must deplore both as the sin and the scourge of nations. Citizens! *you* meditate no violence: you join hands to avert it. You foment no such wars: you recoil at them. War brings nothing before you but danger, and labour, and loss. Why then are you found in arms? I can confidently answer for you, It is merely and entirely to keep *Peace*. It is to defend your King and Country; to preserve Order; to maintain your Liberty, your Property, your Lives, and your Religion. It is, that your families may enjoy quiet at home; that I may, in quiet, meet this attentive congregation on the Sabbath; that we may have a building remain, in which God may be worshipped, and man may be taught the way of salvation. In a word, while outrage is only waiting for an occasion, you are found watching to suppress it.

Who then dwells on *War!* I see nothing before me but officers of the *Peace*:—Volunteers for *Order*:—Citizens banded together for mutual *Defence*; as men who can depend on one another, and as having property and principles to defend. Who speaks of hostility? I hear you saying, "We will oppose it under every pretence. We are sworn enemies to disturbance: and are

* Soame Jenyns.

resolved to bear the toil and cost of making a stand against *invasion*, against *insurrection*, against *plunder*, against *murder*, against *sacrilege*." I hear you saying, "We have seen what has been transacted and is still transacting on the continent; what has reached and has already laid waste part of our Sister Kingdom; what is attempted even in our own—and shall we sit still while mischief is on the wing? Is it any thing but mischief that we aim to resist? Are we not now legally commissioned to resist it? Do not EXTRAORDINARY OCCASIONS WARRANT EXTRAORDINARY EXERTIONS? What then have we done, that we ought not to have done, on the present occasion? IS THERE NOT A CAUSE?"

There certainly is. Were I, indeed, to observe the principle upon which you now proceed, lost in a spirit of contention; or debased by habits of intemperance, profanation of the Sabbath, or by any other modes of dishonouring that religion which you unite to defend; no one, I trust, would be found more ready to reprobate the conduct or lament the evil: but on the contrary, while your object is rightly pursued, as a Minister of the Gospel of Peace I must be glad of such an union of effort to preserve it. I am glad to see the nation at length roused to a sense of its danger: I hail it as awake; *as wise to foresee the evil*, and active to prevent its approach.

Nor is such precaution and girding of ourselves inconsistent with the purest and most absolute dependance on divine preservation, or any precept of revelation when rightly understood. It is the enthusiast alone, who expects the end, while he neglects the means. ABRAHAM believed God: but, on a proper occasion, 'he armed his trained servants born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen;' and, after recover-

ing his brother, was met on his return and blessed by Melchizedec. JACOB wrestled with God for deliverance from a cruel avenger: but still *planned*, with as much policy as if he had never prayed. DAVID was wise in not *trusting* to his bow: but did he throw it away? He resolved not to trust in chariots or in horses: but did he *destroy* them?

But you are men engaged in business—not more so than NEHEMIAH. He was a man of business, and tells us how he conducted it in the midst of enemies. 'They conspired all of them together,' says he, 'to come and fight against Jerusalem. Nevertheless, we made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them day and night. I even set the people, after their families, with their swords, their spears, and their bows. And I looked, and rose up, and said unto the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest of the people, Be ye not afraid of them: remember the Lord which is great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your sons, and your daughters, your wives, and your houses.' He also tells us, 'that every one, with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon. For the builders, every one had his sword girded by his side, and so builded. And he, that sounded the trumpet, was by me.' In this way he could appeal to God, and plead, 'Think upon me, my God, for good, according to all that I have done for this people.'

I therefore repeat it, it is not the believer, but the enthusiast, who expects the end while he neglects the means. The Apostle, when shipwrecked, was assured that no life should be lost; yet when he saw those men deserting the ship who were proper to secure it, he warned the Centurion, 'Except these abide in the ship ye cannot be saved.'

It has been objected, "What if, in the event, a man should fall by my hand?" Would to God such a Christian sensibility were more prevalent through Europe! It would stop many a vain-glorious enterprise. It would wrest the sword from many a rash hand, and turn it into a ploughshare.

But that our conscience may be enlightened as well as tender, we should consider, that the same Scriptures which teach us meekness, in that beautiful hyperbole, 'unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek, offer also the other;' teach us also to regard the interests of society, and the governments under which we live—governments appointed of God 'for the punishment of evil doers,' as well as 'for the praise of them that do well.' It ought to be no question with you as Christians, whether you *would* save the invader of your peace; but, it may be a question with you, as citizens legally appointed to maintain it, whether, all things considered, you *can*. We are bound to pray for an enemy; to do him good for evil; and to try to save him, if possible, from the pit which he is digging: but the law of love, which seeks his good, must not be opposed to the law of self-preservation, which prevents his doing evil.

If, then, while you are thus *disposed* and thus *commissioned* to keep the peace, any one should fall in his attempt to break it, How,—let every one ask himself,—how does such a man fall? Verily, as the housebreaker—as the incendiary—as the assassin—as Goliath. Who kills the lawless ruffian? the magistrate that executes the law? the citizen that stands merely upon his own defence? No: the man kills himself. The son of violence as clearly puts himself to death, as a mad dog that rushes upon the opposed spear. 'He

digged a pit and fell therein, and his blood is upon his own head.'

God forbid that any one should so mistake me here, as to imagine I would justify on *any* account a single act of violence, that can, all things considered, be prevented! But *all things* must be considered, before we can judge rightly of any *one* thing. I would, therefore, recommend to him, who may hesitate to act on account of the *possible* consequences of present exertions, to extend his views to the very *probable* consequences of making no exertions at all; and to ask, what if the son of violence succeeds? What if no spear is held out as he rushes on? What then? Probably, not one perishes, but thousands—not the guilty, but the innocent.

And is this the way to prevent evil? Look at the blood that has been shed,—not only of men in arms, but of men who have made every sacrifice for peace—men, who have presented their cheek to the smiter! Recollect the blood that has been poured out like water on every side—of helpless Old Age! of Women! of Infants! And after contemplating the massacres and conflagrations on the Continent, look at Ireland in order to ascertain the duty of the times in England! Let any one ask, if such calamities had befallen us as have overwhelmed other nations, what bitter reflections must, with reason, have seized every heart on the recollection of a torpid supineness—a death-like lethargy—a fatal presumption of 'peace where there was no peace.'

The sluggard, therefore, who is sent to an insect to learn industry, may go again to study self-preservation. Providence, which presents such occasions to man, has given man reason to meet those occasions. You feel this: and, after the example in my text, you are come down, not to provoke, but to prevent a slaughter.

In 'the name of your God' continue thus to 'set up your banners;' and justly may be inscribed upon every one of them, IS THERE NOT A CAUSE?

Having thus attempted to answer the first inquiry under our general proposition, let us now proceed to another no less necessary: namely,

II. WHAT ARE THOSE DISPOSITIONS, WITH WHICH SUCH EXERTIONS SHOULD BE MADE?

This is an important question: for motives and principles determine the character of actions; insomuch, that two men, in performing the same act, may be the one a good, the other an evil agent. Now no man acts with a right disposition, who does not, like David, proceed,

1. With a reference to GOD.

What, in this affair, respects his honour? What, is to be read of his mind, in the signs of the times? If a *controversy* is rending the nations, in which the agents of Hell are to be resisted; yet hath not the Lord also a controversy with Europe? 'The Lord's voice crieth in the city, and the man of wisdom shall see thy name: Hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it! Is there evil in the city, and the Lord hath not done it!'

And who, that believes his Bible, can wonder at God's controversy with the nations? especially with Christendom! What provocation can He receive, like that of rejecting or slighting the inestimable gift of his Son? The sentiment, 'This man shall not reign over us,' is the master-sin of Europe. It is propagated by system: it is adopted by fashion: it is even countenanced by moralists: and it is expressed in an infinite variety of ways. But, whether it appear open or disguised, it involves such ingratitude and malignity, that,

if it could exist alone, it would sufficiently account for *any* measures of a righteous indignation.

"We will maintain Christianity," says one party. But what Christianity? A solemn farce! in which the *work*, and *word*, and *Spirit* of Christ are made void, and of no effect by your traditions?

"We will have no Christianity," says the other party. "The abuses of Christianity, which we have observed, lead us to determine that it can be of no *use*. We are too good to need any atonement: we are too enlightened to need divine instruction: and, as to spiritual influence, none but knaves or fools so much as consider the subject."

Are these things so? Has this spirit gone forth, not only among the Philistines, but in Israel? No wonder that the 'Lord hath a controversy with Judah, and will punish Jacob according to his ways.' He, therefore, is not rightly disposed, who does not humbly bear the rod, mark who hath appointed it, consider *why* it is appointed, and personally depart from iniquity, while he engages himself to oppose its effects.

But a right disposition not only fears, but also TRUSTS the Lord. Contemplating the occasion, it will employ proper means; but on none of them will it *depend*. The language of such a disposition is, 'Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain —There is no king saved by the multitude of a host: a mighty man is not delivered by much strength. The horse is prepared against the day of battle: but safety is of the Lord.'

Thus went David to meet his enemy: 'Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield; but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of Hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied.' While, therefore, some trust in chariots, and

some in horses, we with David should 'remember the name of the Lord our God.'

And, surely, our God has a special claim upon this nation for the remembrance of his name. 'Come and see what desolations He hath made in the earth,' and then contemplate your peace and privileges at home. What has He done for this nation in former times! What, at this day, is He doing for us! I must dismiss the topic—I am overwhelmed with particulars! General recollection, however, is sufficient to remind us to WHOSE almighty and gracious hand we stand indebted for the blessings which we enjoy at this moment, and upon WHOM alone we can depend for their continuance. Such a recollection should teach us, with Asa and Jehoshaphat, to look away from human strength, numbers, arrangements, and exertions; lest folly, weakness, and disappointment should be written on them all. Then, and then only, do we exert ourselves rightly, and advance against invaders with a well-grounded hope of success, when, with the men just mentioned, we own and forsake our sins, trust in promised mercy, and, employing the means put into our hands, cry, with them, 'Help us, O Lord our God—in thy name we go against this multitude—our eyes are upon thee.'

To set up our banners on any other ground, is to fall into the atheism of our enemy. His language, like that of Sennacherib and Goliath, has always been with me a token for good. Notwithstanding his temporary success, we should hold fast this truth, THE LORD REIGNETH. Such an enemy, like the Assyrian, may serve for a time as 'The Rod of God's anger,' which He 'sends against hypocritical nations to take the prey, and tread them down like the mire of the streets. Howbeit HE meaneth not so.' He seems to say, "'Shall I not as I have done unto Samaria and her idols, so do

to Jerusalem and her idols!' Religion is but superstition, whether in London or in Rome."

But 'shall the axe' thus 'boast itself against Him, that heweth therewith? or the rod shake itself against Him, that lifts it up?' I will take courage while my enemy thus vaunts himself: I tremble when I hear any leader on our side imitate his language.

'Sanctify, therefore, the Lord of Hosts himself: and he shall be for a sanctuary.' The worse the present aspect of affairs, the more need have we to remember the name of the Lord our God. Whoever now frets under difficulties, and thereby increases them; let us recollect ourselves and our only Helper. He alone, who once said to the raging sea, 'Peace, be still,' can now speak peace to the nations. Whenever it comes, HE ought to be acknowledged as the sole giver of it; and in the mean time, He will keep them 'in perfect peace, whose minds are stayed on HIM.'

2. To proceed with a right disposition, we must regard our NEIGHBOUR.

Confining our views here to the occasion, let me remark, that, while the maintenance of peace and order is the single object of this association, UNION is its strength. It may not consist with the health and avocations of every neighbour to join you as a corps. Every neighbour cannot think with you about some particular measures; and some, like Eliab, may be ready to speak *before* they think. Here, brethren, 'Let your moderation be known unto all men.' Study to show yourselves, like the children of Issachar, 'men that have understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do.'

David, in my text, affords us an incomparable example in this respect. "David," says an excellent commentator, "had right and reason on his side: and,

therefore, did not render railing for railing; but, with a soft answer, turned away his brother's wrath. This conquest of his own passion, was, in some respects, more honourable than that over Goliath. 'He, that hath rule over his own spirit, is better than the mighty.' It was no time for David to quarrel with his brother, when the Philistines were upon them. The more threatening the Church's enemies are, the more forbearing her friends should be with one another."

In a word, our exertions should be conducted with such wisdom and moderation, benevolence and forbearance, comprehension and energy, that UNION upon the broadest scale may be effected. It is a master-stroke in our enemies, abroad and at home, to damp the efforts which they cannot prevent: to separate you by suspicion—to unhinge you with discord—to discountenance you with ridicule. They will affect to despise, what they really fear. They will attempt to benumb by a panic those endeavours, which they know to be irresistible when in union and in action. And need you to be told the success of such stratagems?

What, then, let me ask, is a right disposition respecting our neighbour, in an association like this? or in such of us as wish to concur with it as our common defence? Evidently, to unite for a just end: to pursue that end with a temper which, while it seeks to disarm the *disturber*, would try if possible to save the *man:* to abstain from even the appearance of injury: and thus, by a variety in our exertions, to produce an unity in effect. Whether, therefore, we are found in arms or not, on the present occasion, let us be one in heart; for, IS THERE NOT A CAUSE?

3. To advance with a right disposition, we must regard OURSELVES.

To be found in the due improvement of those privi-

leges for which we are contending, is essential to our character as Wise Men, as well as Christians. Are we banded for a party? for a humour? Or, on the contrary, is it not to secure privileges of inestimable value, both civil and religious? But while we are anxious to *secure* them, especially the highest of them,—our religion; should we not be equally anxious to *improve* what we secure? Suppose this House of God, in which we are now assembled, to be assaulted, and the inhabitants, who surround it, to rise in its defence; suppose, after the tumult was over, they paid no regard to the opportunities afforded by it for devotion or instruction; must not the minister say to such,—"For what have ye fought? For the *walls*, or the *worship*, of this Sanctuary? 'Whether is greater, the temple, or He that dwelleth therein?' While ye neglect its services, the temple itself that ye have defended stands a witness against you."

Thus it is with the best and highest of those privileges, for which thousands at this day are ready to contend. Christianity stands as a witness against many of its defenders. How many, in a national struggle, are ready to die for Religion, who yet are spiritually dead to it! How many spurn at a *Decade*, who yet profane the *Sabbath!* How many fathers of a Country and bulwarks of a Church have secured every thing in both, but their own Souls! defended the faith, yet perished in unbelief! opposed Satan one way, yet lived his captives in another! My heart has yearned at marking a great man, wise in his generation, skilfully holding the reins of a vast enterprize, grasping with a mighty mind its various relations, and penetrating with an eagle's eye, into—what!—every thing but HIMSELF —a fallen spirit, in a disordered world! having a day of Salvation, and that neglected! How natural was

the dying language of such an one, when he cried out, "The battle is fought—the battle is fought: but the victory is lost for ever!"

Alas! how many celebrated Geniuses, how many deep Philosophers, how many splendid Conquerors, shall awake in eternity from their vain dreams of glory, each wishing he had been an idiot, or even a brute, that he might never have been eternally a wretch—responsible for talents and privileges neglected and abused!

David is our example in a personal use and improvement of the privileges for which he contended. He felt a holy indignation at the Philistine's profaneness. He fought for the God and worship of Israel; and he also knew how to prize and employ the blessings which he hath won. His 'heart longed, yea fainted for the living God;' he esteemed 'a day in his courts better than a thousand:' he entered into the Sanctuary, to escape the errors of the world; and finding his worst foes to be those which assaulted his heart and dishonoured his God, he sought the disposition which he needed:—'Create,' says he, 'in me a clean heart, Oh God; and renew a right spirit within me!' Such a disposition to regard our own souls, in the improvement of our present advantages, distinguishes the wise contender. He is prepared, like David, with a reply to every objection. He is armed to meet every terror; even that of the last enemy, who must lay waste the hopes of every other adventurer. He can rest secure of final conquest—not the blaze of a moment, but that Glory, Honour, and Immortality described by the Apostle when he saw 'them that had gotten the victory standing with the harps of God, and singing the song of Moses and of the Lamb.'

In concluding, I address you first, as CITIZENS.

The *Cause* in which you are engaged has been

shown to be, not only lawful, but laudable. There are times, in which neutrality is a disgrace—in which, not to oppose is, seemingly at least, to abet. The *Dispositions* also with which you should proceed in such times with respect to GOD, your NEIGHBOUR, and YOURSELVES, have been pointed out. Firmly proceed, therefore, while the occasion calls for your beneficial exertions. To the arms of the different associations, under God, I must ascribe the present tranquillity of this country. The good effect of your associating is already strikingly evident: the spirit of tumult is not dead; but has it not shrunk from sight? Is it not awed to silence?

Go on, then, and may the LORD OF HOSTS go with you! may HE give you, who alone *can* give you, right *dispositions* in a right *cause*. Go on,—but I most earnestly beseech you, stop not short in your work. Make not so fatal a mistake as to think your work done when the present troubles subside. There are enemies (need I name them?) which, if you conquer not, you must sink, after all your exertions and successes, into everlasting shame and contempt. What are other slaughters, compared with those of the World, the Flesh, and the Devil? The thousands who perish in time by the sword are lost among the millions who perish everlastingly by sin. Before you go again to the field, 'Go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against God; for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched, and they shall be an abhorring to all flesh.'

I have shown the cause which there is for your exertions; and I feel the cause which there is for MINE. The times form a sufficient apology for every effort which a Minister, as well as a Soldier, can make. Look at the strides of insubordination, irreligion, infi-

delity! But look not only at France; look at Home, where they proceed with an aggravated guilt. What efforts can you or I make to oppose them, which are not warranted by the times? The heartless may contemn, and the scornful may provoke; but 'what have we now done? IS THERE NOT A CAUSE?'

There is: a cause, not only for exertion, but for confidence. 'Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift!' He has shown us a remedy for this and every other evil. 'He has lifted up an ensign to the nations.' I cannot vouch for the vision of Constantine; but whether *he* saw, or did not see, such an ensign, with its inscription,* as history describes, such an one is ever to be seen by the eye of faith. 'There shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an Ensign of the people: to it shall the Gentiles seek; and his rest shall be glorious.' I can vouch, that to fight under this consecrated banner, is to be more than a conqueror. Though foes surround you, against which your arms, your wisdom, your strength, can avail nothing; happy am I in this opportunity of directing your attention to that Ensign, which God hath lifted up: and under which I earnestly pray that we may live and die, fighting as 'good soldiers of JESUS CHRIST.' It is against THIS, that our enemies abroad and at home have entered into a deep and hellish conspiracy: it is before this, that they are doomed to fall; and it is before this, that they must be brought to receive their sentence.

But, with this banner, be YE victorious. Departing from the tents of these wicked men, wisely improve the first of those blessings for which you contend. The salvation which is in Christ Jesus, is the one grand, interesting consideration of fallen man. In HIS strength, 'Fight the good fight of faith: lay hold of

* Εν τουτῳ νικα, "With this be victorious."

eternal life: for HE, THAT OVERCOMETH, SHALL INHERIT ALL THINGS.'

CHRISTIANS, whether in arms or not, you *know* the truths which I speak; you know them *experimentally;* and I trust you do not forget the obligations of Christians in times like the present. Whatever temporary inconvenience you feel from the present contest, I trust you are impressed with a grateful recollection, that, while 'the floods lift up their voice, and the waves are mighty and rage horribly; yet the LORD, who dwelleth on high, is mightier;' and, respecting us, hath said, 'Hitherto shalt thou come and no further, and here shall the proud waves be stayed.'

But let us, as Christians, rejoice with trembling: for Infidels, of late, have employed a new and successful engine. Christians, whom they despaired of moving by their *arguments*, they have enticed to dabble in their *politics;* till in the abounding of iniquity, the love of many has waxed cold. 'Watch ye,' therefore, Christians! 'stand fast in the faith: quit you like men: be strong. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil.'

But a Christian should not only keep his ground in such times, but should advance with an energy and an interest peculiar to himself. If you cannot, with Abraham, arm yourself or your family, you certainly can with him, *intercede.* If you cannot be a leader, like Moses, you can, with him 'lift up your hands' in prayer for the defeat of Amalek. If threatenings mixed with blasphemies are poured out and alarm the nation, you can, with Hezekiah, spread them before HIM, who dwells between the Cherubims. You can stand in the gap: you can run, like Aaron, 'between the living and the dead, till the plague is stayed.'

CHRISTIANS, it is not conceived by others, nor do

you sufficiently conceive yourselves, what one steady, resolved, recollected believer, with a public spirit, may effect. The man, who dares to be right—who asks, not what men are pleased to think or say, but what he ought to think and do—who feels this short life to be his only opportunity, for glorifying God on this side of Eternity :—this man is a host. Witness the man, the stripling, I should say, in my text. Such an one sees the Captain of his Salvation going forth in every tempest which arises, and directing them all. He joins himself to Omnipotence. He fears God, and therefore has none else to fear. He rests in Him, and thus collects fresh strength for his labours. CHRISTIANS, are your loins *thus girded?* Let your 'lights also be burning, and stand like men who wait for their Lord.'

To the CONGREGATION, at large, I now address myself.

The Lord of these servants is coming; and, before him, shall be gathered all nations. But there will not be a single individual among them, who will not *then* feel these truths to be THE GRAND CONCERN OF MAN. Oh may they be accepted with gratitude and joy, *now;* that they may not overwhelm us with unutterable anguish and despair in the presence of the Judge! For, 'behold, He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they also that pierced Him. Even so. Amen.'

THE SWORD OF THE LORD.

O thou Sword of the Lord, how long will it be ere thou be quiet? Put up thyself into thy Scabbard: rest, and be still. How can it be quiet, seeing the Lord hath given it a charge against Ashkelon?... Jer. xlvii. 6, 7.

When called to address an Armed Association on a former occasion, I felt it my duty to consider the *lawfulness* and *expediency* of such an association. I then endeavoured to prove, that if, like David, you had quitted for a time your more peaceful occupations to wield the sword, you were warranted, in present circumstances, to repel any objection by replying with him, "Is there not a cause?"

I trust the arguments then adduced for the necessity of your recourse to arms, need neither to be repeated nor enforced. The same cause still exists: and that, with accumulated aggravation: and I must add, that you have a claim both upon the *gratitude* and upon the *assistance* of your fellow-citizens, in this laudable effort.

The present occasion, however, of our assembling is that of humbling ourselves before God on a National Fast. Such an occasion is very distinct from the former. On the former, we might, with propriety, discuss the measure of employing the sword as a necessary *expedient;* but, on a day like this, we are naturally led to deplore it as a *judgment;* to tremble before Omnipotence in arms; and to remember that the Almighty has expressly described War as one of his 'four sore judgments:' Ezek. xiv. 21.

While, therefore, as rational creatures, we adopt the means of security which the times so imperiously demand, let me call your attention, on a day of appointed humiliation, to some general reflections on 'The Sword of the Lord.'

In this passage of Scripture, we have a prophetical denunciation of Jeremiah 'against the Philistines, before Pharaoh smote Gaza.' The prophet foretells an appointed invasion, shortly to overwhelm a nation which added to its other crimes a bitter enmity to Israel. He then describes some of its dreadful effects; but, recoiling at the horrors which he foresaw, he seems to shrink from his own message, and thus utters the feelings of his heart: 'O thou sword of the Lord, how long will it be ere thou be quiet? Put up thyself into thy scabbard: rest, and be still.' Recollecting, however, that it was the 'sword of the LORD,' and that it had a special commission to execute his righteous judgment, he adds, 'How can it be quiet, seeing the Lord hath given it a charge against Ashkelon?'

In speaking to you on this subject, I shall contemplate the 'Sword of the Lord' as A SORE JUDGMENT —AN APPOINTED AVENGER—and A SOLEMN MONITOR.

I. A SORE JUDGMENT.

In a single division of this discourse, I can but glance at the dispensation; yet I cannot but help stopping to mark the illusion that is over our minds, while distant from the actual seat of war. We coolly demonstrate its necessity: we sit at ease and in plenty: hearing only its rumours: the sound of its thunder, because *distant*, loses its terror. The Ambitious, on a victory, swell at the idea of national aggrandizement: the Politician reclines by his fire, drinks his wine, and feels somewhat *disappointed*, if his paper brings no account of a hard

fought battle: the Idle wander to a review, and are entertained with the glitter of arms, the melody of martial music, and "all the pomp and circumstance of glorious war;" but how little do they reflect to what unutterable woe such preparation tends! like infants, who admire the polish and workmanship of their father's sword; but consider not that it is *formed* to be a weapon of death, and *drawn* to be bathed in blood.

But, while the unthinking amuse themselves with the splendid apparatus of war, and more solid minds sadly ruminate on its dreadful necessity, every good man must deplore its inevitable consequences. To say nothing of the scarcity of provisions, which it may occasion; the demand upon property; the sweeping away the flower of the youth and strength of a nation, and appointing them like so many sheep for the slaughter—to say nothing of the miseries attending war from fatigue, famine, contagion, dangers, and mortal diseases, as well as from the sword—not to mention the grey hairs of parents brought in sorrow to the grave; nor the deeper sorrows of bereaved widows and their fatherless children: I say, passing by these—I would call your attention, as members of the Christian Church, to the consideration of the vast multitudes of your fellow creatures plunged at a stroke into eternity; and plunged at a moment, when the spirit of war has roused their minds to violence and revenge little short of fury.

Let none mistake me here, as if I meant to reflect on the profession or heart of a soldier, as such.

He may be, and he often is, a man of the most humane and generous feelings: and such an one will be found weeping over the miseries, which he must, as a soldier, inflict. A soldier, who, like the brave Col. Gardiner, unites piety and humanity with the most determined courage, stands among the first of human char-

acters. It must be evident, therefore, that I am speaking, not of the defect of the *man*, but of *the nature and tendency of* WAR, and of its ordinary effects as a sore judgment.

But the appearance of Armed Citizens naturally calls my recollection to that part of war, which is attended with accumulated horrors: I speak of INVASION. It is this destination of the sword, that the present prophecy particularly regards. 'Before Pharaoh,' the Invader, 'smote Gaza,' the prophet predicts that 'waters,' the prophetical figure for a great multitude, 'should rise up out of the north'—that 'an overflowing flood should overflow the land and all that was therein'—that 'the inhabitants of it should howl at the noise of the stamping of the hoofs of his strong horses, at the rushing of his chariots,' and 'at the rumbling of his wheels;' and such should be the general consternation of that day, that even 'fathers should not look back to their children for feebleness of hands'—You, who are parents, will feel, with me, that a stronger image than this could not be used, to express terror in the extreme.

If the most ordinary conception did not exceed any description, it would be sufficient to recollect facts, even of our *own* times, respecting a country subjugated by war. The Scriptures describe almost literally—'the field wasted—the land mourning—the inhabitants trembling—a fire devouring before the enemy, and behind them a flame burning—the land, as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness—all hands fainting, and every man's heart melting: pangs taking hold of them as a woman that travaileth—they stand amazed at one another'—Well, therefore, may this be called 'the day of the Lord's anger; great, and very terrible; and who can abide it?'

But, would to God, this were the *worst* that could

be said of the sore judgment which we now consider! There is something yet worse than the plunder of the ruffian—than the outrage of the ravisher—than the stab of the murderer. These are, comparatively, but the momentary evils of war. There is, also, (as all history, as well as that of our own times, will show,) a shocking *moral* appendage which naturally grows out of national conflict, though it may be occasionally restrained. For, instead of listening to the counsels of divine mercy, and concurring in the design of a Kingdom of Heaven set up on earth in 'righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost;' the spirit of warlike discord tends to entomb every such idea. It rather tends to set up something like a kingdom of Hell —a reign of violence, where destruction is the grand enterprise; where the means of death and desolation are cultivated as a science; where invention is racked to produce ruin, and the performance of it is ennobled by public applause. Moloch seems once more enthroned; while ambition, revenge, and oppression erect their banners amidst groans and tears; amidst cities desolated or smoking in their ashes.

If, therefore, we contemplate this sore judgment in a *moral* view, it appears to be an incomparably greater calamity than either pestilence or famine. I must, therefore, repeat the distinction already made, that, however lawful and necessary the recourse to arms may be in times like ours, yet such is WAR: and such it appears, my Fellow Citizens, *you* have considered it in thus forming yourselves into a band to prevent its ravages. What is all the military toil, expense, and preparation, which I see, but your efforts to *prevent* what I describe and deplore? If *you* take arms, it is only to preserve *peace*. If *you* draw the sword, it is that the sword of an aggressor may be returned to its scabbard.

You do but arrest the hand, which seizes a weapon; and from what I now advance, you will, I trust, be more ready to arrest it. We, therefore, perfectly agree in design; and may God accept, this day, our joint endeavours!

But, to pursue our subject. We shall find this day of vengeance darken as we proceed in the examination, since it tends to eclipse the only ray of hope sent to cheer a perishing sinner. Its storms roughen his path to a better country, and deprive him of his appointed supports in the way.—Ah! heavenly RELIGION, holy, humble, benevolent, travelling to a city wherein dwelleth righteousness, where shall rest be found for the sole of thy foot whilst war is ravaging the earth?—True Religion, like her Prophet, is 'very jealous for the Lord God of Hosts;' but the sons of violence 'despise his covenant, throw down his altars, and slay his prophets with the sword:' in the mean time, she wanders a stranger; listening, after the 'earthquake and the fire,' to 'a still small voice, Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.' Let *us* thus listen, my Fellow Worshippers in this House of Prayer, till the sword is returned to its scabbard; remembering, at the *worst* that it is a sword in the hand of our Father.

You will say, "This view of the sword is horrible, in the extreme; though such extreme cases do not always occur."

I must beg your attention, while I correct this sentiment; and prove, that the sore judgment of War has not yet been shown in the *extreme*.

The Prophet looked far beyond the hand of man when he exclaimed, 'O thou sword of the Lord when wilt thou be quiet?' In the hand of man, however am-

bitious and cruel, the sword may sometimes be resisted. Caprice or interest may sheath the sword of a tyrant: a moment may sink him, like Pharaoh, 'as lead in the mighty waters:' a moment may cast his carcase, like Belshazzar's, on a dunghill: or make him, like *Herod*, a monument of human pride and weakness. There was no need of an army, in his case, to prove the distinction between the sword of *man*, and the sword of the *Lord*: a few worms, in as few moments, did the work.

We have not considered this calamity in the *extreme*, till we view it as mingled with the righteous wrath of an offended God: and, when HE arises in judgment, 'who can stay HIS hand, or say unto him what doest THOU?' Hear his own declaration—'See now that I, even I, am he: I kill, and I make alive: I wound, and I heal: neither is there any, that can deliver out of my hand. For I lift up my hand to heaven, and say, I live for ever. If I whet my glittering sword, and my hand take hold on judgment, I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and will reward them that hate me. I will make mine arrows drunk with blood, and my sword shall devour flesh.'

Beholding such an adversary on his way, well might the Prophet exclaim, 'O thou sword of the Lord, how long will it be ere thou be quiet? Put up thyself into thy scabbard: rest, and be still.' Yet 'how can it be quiet?' since the text leads us to consider it as,

II. AN APPOINTED AVENGER.

Scripture teaches us, that the *sword* is but a messenger; proceeding with a special commission to plead the cause of him, who hath appointed it. It was, therefore, that the Prophet seems like one under recollection, after expressing his compassionate expostulation. As

if he had said, "I have been calling on the sword to rest and be still, but 'how can it be quiet?' It is on its way to stop a Rebellion, which still rages, and lifts up its face against the Most High. The sword, with which I now expostulate, does but execute its office. The Lord 'hath given it a charge against Ashkelon, and against the Sea-shore: THERE, THERE, hath he appointed it.'"

When we hear the MOST HIGH saying concerning a guilty nation, 'If I bring a sword upon that land, and say, Sword, go through the land, so that I cut off man and beast,' he immediately informs us, that this sword, whatever may be the evil motive of the man that wields it, is as much executing an express charge of Heaven, as any one of his other sore judgments, famine or pestilence.

But the veil that is on the heart of man prevents his regarding any thing but the visible *machinery* of war. Like the young man who attended upon Elisha, he sees, with trembling, the horses and chariots of *men;* but nothing of that arm of Omnipotence, stretched out in battle array, which the prophet saw. Man stops at the *effect:* God calls him to regard the *cause.* A sword is as harmless, in itself, as a ploughshare; but when grasped in anger it assumes an aspect of terror. God, however, teaches us, that the man himself, who grasps it, is but a sword in his own hand, permitted or appointed. 'Arise, O Lord,' says the Psalmist, 'disappoint him: cast him down: deliver my soul from the wicked, which is THY sword; from men, which are THY hand.'

This short-sightedness leads to the great swelling words of vanity, found in the mouths of little perishing insects of a day. We are taught from childhood to admire that presumption in a storm, which vaunted to an

affrighted mariner, "Fear not: you carry Cæsar!" But who was Cæsar? verily, but a feeble worm, sent to execute his Maker's commission but a few days before that, in which he himself was trodden under foot *as* a worm. Who was that Royal Desperado, that, in despite of God's warning, would madly go up to battle? only a *single* bow was drawn, and that at a *venture;* yet the Lord made even a solitary arrow his appointed avenger, and gave it a charge to find its way to the heart of Ahab, through the joints of his harness. Who was that Tyrant, that proudly thought his sword had no other commission than what he himself gave it? 'Shall I not,' says he, 'do to Jerusalem, as I have done to Samaria?' No! you shall not: you have no such commission. 'Therefore the daughter of Zion hath despised thee, and laughed thee to scorn.' But, 'Thus saith the Lord, because thy rage against me, and thy tumult is come up into mine ears, therefore I will put my hook in thy nose and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest.' And who, let me ask, is that *other* Tyrant, for whom the same *hook* and *bridle* are reserved? He, who is now trampling on the liberties, property, and lives of Europe? verily, *nothing*, in himself—*every thing* that is dreadful, while permitted to act as a sword.

However, therefore, you may abhor the ambition, the cruelty, the falsehood, the rapacity of such a destroyer; and, as the common friends of mankind, resolutely withstand *his* designs—still, still, I earnestly entreat you, consider what is necessary to this end. 'Run not as uncertainly. Fight, not as one that beateth the air.' Stand to your arms, but take firm hold of THAT HAND, which holds the sword, and which alone can return it into its scabbard. In the mean time, let us recollect, with a holy fear, that it has long had a charge against

Europe; that it is still *drawn*, and that it is nothing short of Atheism, to look at our national resources, or at our *rampart the sea*, and say, "*It cannot come hither!*" The inquiry should be, Whose sword is it? Who appoints it? And who can resist it when thus appointed, whether it be against Ashkelon or England?

And 'how can it be quiet,' whenever the Lord appoints it to plead his cause? a cause big with reasons far beyond the ken of a mere politician.

"It continues to ravage the earth," says one, "because the ambition and rapacity of one man is insatiable." Admitted. But what (as I have just shown) did an inspired writer say of such men? 'Deliver my soul from the wicked, which is THY sword.'

"It continues," says another, "because the Sovereigns of Europe are impolitic dastards: they consider not their own interest." Suppose *this*, too, admitted: who hath threatened 'to pour a spirit of deep sleep on Rulers,' and 'to destroy the counsel of Princes?'

"It continues," says a third, "because a capital error was committed in a former negotiation: the single opportunity of peace was lost." Were this also admitted, it should suffice to recollect, who it was that *permitted* this error, and who can now *recall* it.

"It continues," says a fourth, "from *necessity*. The present state of Europe can admit of nothing more than an armed peace." Admitted, again! But who made this necessity? This very necessity is 'the sword of the Lord:' it is but the appointed avenger. *How*, then, *can it be quiet?*

But does *Europe* need *particular* and *doubtful* reasons, in order to account for its convulsed state?

It is, in fact, but wretched *trifling*, to call in the feeble conjectures of Politicians, in order to account for the appointment of a sword to go through our modern

Ashkelon,—EUROPE. Such opinions, even when *just*, look only to MEANS, but stop infinitely short of the cause. But it is the CAUSE, which the word of God is repeatedly bringing forward; and which the blind, unbelieving heart of man is continually forgetting. The sword has long been drawn, and (to pass by now any enumeration of transgressions common, perhaps, to Ashkelon and to Europe) *how can it be quiet*, while Infidelity has been taking gigantic strides, unknown, till of late, in Christendom? How *can it be quiet*, when, even among *us*, opposition and contempt are daily harassing the few remaining friends of truth, in their endeavours to abolish that abominable traffic the Slave Trade abroad, or to suppress the grosser vices and open profanations at home? Do the 'wicked so walk on every side, as to put to rebuke' every effort of virtue? Are we grown such admirers of our old inveterate enemies, the French, that, if we do not actually abolish the Sabbath *in name*, we resolve to destroy the *thing*, by our Sunday Entertainments, Sunday Travelling, Sunday Concerts,—by business or by pleasure on that holy day? *How can it be quiet*, if, while that old stupendous idol of a blind superstition, Popery, is tottering on its basis, and while its visible head is become the contemptible tail of a bold usurpation, we, whether Churchmen or Dissenters, attempt to set it up under another *form*, and call it *Christianity*? For, let me ask, what is heartless religion, whether among Papists or Protestants, but a dead image of a living thing? And what is our dead image better than that which our fathers abandoned at the Reformation?—an image scarcely having a *form* of godliness; but utterly denying, yea sometimes opposing, the *power* thereof—an image, no more that religion which Christ came to set up in the world,

than the image of David, which Michal laid on the pillow of goat's hair, was the David who had fled.

Brethren, this is neither a time nor occasion for temporizing concealments; nor shall I consider, for a moment, what the advocates for a barren and lifeless profession of religion may object to these remonstrances. My answer is *ready*, and it is *short*—'They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them.' The enemies of vital religion dare to be loud in their opposition; and are we, the Ministers of Christ and Stewards of his mysteries, to shrink in such a cause? No: rather let us descend to the *root* of this evil: let us examine whether there be not some MASTER-SIN, from which present evils may be traced; and thereby account for an express charge given to the sword—that sword, which has desolated Europe, and long threatened this country.

But, a word respecting this Master-Sin.

I see grave men alarmed; and hear them complaining of the ungodliness of the times. They lament that the fruits of righteousness among us are as the 'shaking of an olive tree: two or three berries on an uppermost bough.' But they seem not sufficiently to consider that these 'fruits of righteousness' can only be derived from a union by faith with JESUS CHRIST, and thus tend 'to the glory and praise of God.' 'I am the vine,' says Christ: 'abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me'—for, 'without me, ye can do nothing.' No man, who calls himself a Christian, can be supposed to deny this statement of our Master: and will any such man wonder why so little of the *fruits of righteousness* are found among us? Can he see this infinite condescension of 'God manifest in the flesh'—*this* source of all spiritual life, grace, and

love—I say, can he see this scarcely noticed in the *Nation*, in the *Senate*, in the *Courts*, in the *Camp*, in the *Schools*—I had almost said in the *Pulpit*, and then gravely inquire for 'fruits of righteousness?' or cease to tremble before the 'sword of the Lord' in its appointment against Christendom? Rather, will he not say, "While these things ARE,—*how can it be quiet?*"

But let us, Brethren, enter into the design of Holy Scripture, in recording those judgments which have fallen on other nations, and regard the 'sword of the Lord' as,

III. A SOLEMN MONITOR.

When the Lord appoints the sword to avenge his cause in other nations, he speaks to those on whom it has not yet fallen. He generally speaks, *before* he strikes; but he always speaks, in striking. "Even Ehud's poinard," says the pious Bishop Hall, "was God's message: not only the vocal admonitions, but also the real judgments of God, are his errands to the world." He seems to repeat, in such events, "'Fear ye not me, saith the Lord? Will ye not tremble at my presence?' Will ye not gather, from every stroke of my righteous judgments on others, what sentiments ye yourselves should cultivate till this sword be returned into its scabbard?"

And what *are* those sentiments, which we should cultivate in present circumstances?

Not those of the *Vindictive*, who, like enraged tigers, furiously bite the spear which they cannot avoid; who scorn to treat; who pant for what *they* term a proud day for England, whatever it costs. 'Scatter,' says the Psalmist, 'the people who delight in war.' But when, like some nobler minds on record, the soldier would save and succour, where he is not obliged to de-

stroy; he appears, indeed, an angel of *vengeance*, but, *yet*, an ANGEL.

Not those of the *Presumptuous*, who say, "Let him come. We wish the attempt to be made. The result will be glorious to our arms." Have these men *quite* forgot, that there is a God, and that war is his *Sword?* Let us, my dear hearers, learn our entire dependence on the God of Battles: and tremble when *He* takes the sword, though the worst tyrant that ever breathed on earth executes the commission—whether a Nebuchadnezzar, or a Sennacherib; a Tippoo Saib, or a Buonaparte.

Not those of the *Restless*, whom no men, no measures can long please: who can cavil and embarrass, but not assist, even with a finger, the common effort. A man of this description will find fault every where, except where it is most to be found,—in himself.

Least of all should we cultivate the sentiments of the *Negligent;* men, who will supinely look on, while the Invader confiscates their property; annihilates their rights, civil and sacred; violates the chastity of their family; and puts a knife to their throat. What! are these men more irrational than brutes, who know the use of their horns and hoofs? The secret purposes of God should never be confounded with the relative duties of life. As a wise and good Prince may employ the basest of his subjects for his *executioner;* so we learn, both from Scripture and from Fact, that God often employs the worst of men to execute his judgments. But, while He is executing them, he calls us, as his rational creatures, to employ such measures of security as he hath enabled us to use: and it is only in a vigorous prosecution of them, that we can warrantably hope for success, or comfortably meet the reverse. To trust God without the use of means, is to tempt him: to use means

without dependence on God, is to despise him. *Duty* is ours: *Events* are God's. Nor can *Religion* be brought forward in vindication of any such supineness: as I considered more at large on a former occasion.

Instead, therefore, of a sluggish or presumptuous neglect of those means of defence which Providence has put into our hands, let us imitate the wise conduct of Jacob, in contriving the most effectual methods for disarming his malignant brother. Let us learn of Joshua, to use *every* measure which sound policy and determined courage dictate for counteracting the designs of the common enemy. Let us stand, like Nehemiah, armed for *war*, as well as diligent in our proper callings; and having, like him, thus 'played the man for our people, and for the cities of our God, let the Lord do that which seemeth Him good.'

The Volunteer System, so numerous in its members, and so determined in its object, is a splendid monument in English History. Such a union of zeal and unanimity one cannot but hope comes from God, as a 'token for good.' A still stronger token for good is, the zeal which has been kindled in the hearts of many for the support and propagation of the Gospel. But the best warranted hope is, from that Spirit of Prayer which has long been stirred up in the breasts of real Christians, of all denominations, for the safety of the nation. We should be thankful that we can mark such 'tokens for good,' in times like these. The record of Nineveh's deliverance should ever be present to our minds on a Public Fast; and should prevent despondency, even while the most Solemn Monitor is speaking.

Nor ought I to pass by the good example which the Volunteers before me have set, in having never blotted their profession, no, not in a single instance, by profaning the Sabbath in the exercise of their arms.

Strange infatuation, indeed, in those who could concert or employ such a measure for safety! What! will men pray to God for success in their undertakings, on the very day in which they mean to break his *commands*? They hear their Minister proclaim, on divine authority, 'Remember that thou keep Holy the Sabbath Day:' "Lord have mercy upon us," they reply, "and incline our hearts to keep this law." Keep this law! what, by the exercise of arms—by disturbance—by dissipation—by gathering together and amusing an immense number of idle spectators? Shall we hope to defend our nation, by imitating the profaneness of our enemies; and that under a dispensation of light which *they* never enjoyed?

The man of piety will not only listen himself to the Solemn Monitor, which speaks so loudly to Europe at this day; but will also join the Prophet, in his pathetic exclamation, 'My bowels, my bowels! I am pained at the heart; for thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet and the alarm of war.' The very next reflection, however, which will arise in his mind, will be this—"Oh that my country also could hear the voice of *God* in this war! and seriously inquire, 'Show me wherefore thou contendest with me—Oh that it knew, at least in this day of its visitation, the things that belong to its peace!'—a day, when not only a drawn sword hangs over it, but a raging pestilence also threatens its shores, and has occasioned its government to call in the aid of medical science, and bid it stand on the watch for our national security. Oh," says he, "that it knew, at least in this its day, how much it lacks that ONE thing so essentially needful, a spirit of true and vital RELIGION! This would give an ear to the *Admonition*. This would put *meaning* into its Fasts.

This would give true confidence to its arms, and afford it security against every Invader."

Such, indeed, *must* be the natural reflection of every pious man. And, true it *is*, that a spirit of *real* religion would teach us, with Abraham, to intercede on this fast, even for our hostile neighbours. It would lead us, with Daniel, to humble ourselves before the Most High; and to cry, 'O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of face.' It would instruct us, like David, when he saw the destroying angel stretch a drawn sword over Jerusalem, to fall on our faces, confess our sins, and call for mercy. It would incline us, with Jeremiah, to pity and thus to instruct, even the despisers of our giving glory this day to the Most High; 'Hear ye, and give ear: be not proud; for the Lord hath spoken. Give glory unto the Lord your God, before he cause darkness—But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride.'

A pious man, impressed with the warning of this Solemn Monitor, will naturally, in his retirements, ruminate on his ultimate resource, under all possible consequences. He may picture to himself the rising up, at an unexpected moment, of an invading army; rushing on, like a mighty torrent that has broken down its banks, and overwhelms the adjacent country: he sees every effort made by the distracted inhabitants, to repel its violence, or to flee from its approaches. But, in such an extremity as this, will any thing present itself to his mind, but the utter *weakness* of man, and the almighty power of *God?* Oh the strong consolation, at such a moment, of that voice, 'When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee!'—Brethren, such an extremity has visited nations around us: such an extremity may visit *us*. May we be prepared *thus* to meet it!

We are admonished: but do we lay to heart this warning voice? As a man, who is overtaken with his neighbour in a storm, and, seeing him fall by a stroke of lightning, walks on with trembling lest the next flash should be directed to himself; so should we be found walking on the day of national humiliation, before the Lord of Hosts.

Fellow Citizens, and Fellow Sinners! if I have wearied your patience by the length of my discourse, impute it to my zeal as your *Minister*, and to my affection as your *Brother*. And as any particular Application of it is precluded by such enlargement, let it suffice to recollect its general aim:—TO ADVANCE AND ENFORCE THE UNIVERSAL DOMINION OF HIM, WITHOUT WHOM EVEN A SPARROW FALLS NOT TO THE GROUND; AND TO POINT OUT THAT STATE OF MIND, IN WHICH WE SHOULD STAND BEFORE HIM ON THE PRESENT OCCASION.

In a day of atheistical rebuke and blasphemy, like the present, you will doubtless meet with some, who will despise such considerations. What serious truth will not ignorance, joined with vice, despise? You may properly, however, inform them, that ENGLAND was once lost to an invader; and you will do well to bid them mark the *circumstances* in which it was lost. "The *English*," says Rapin, "*spent the whole night in carousing and singing, as if they were* SURE *of victory. The Normans, on the contrary, were employed in preparing for the battle, and offering up prayers to God for success.*" You know *the event:* and you know who hath said, 'Them that honour me I will honour.'

And now 'I bow my knees to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,' that my feeble labours this day for your welfare may not be in vain. We shall

certainly meet together once more; but probably not till THAT day when these truths will admit of no doubt. In the mean time, the grave will mingle the dust of Ministers and Soldiers; and that both may enter it, having first obtained a complete victory over it, may God of his infinite mercy grant, for Jesus Christ's sake! Amen.

ANNIVERSARY SERMON;

PREACHED BEFORE THE

SOCIETY FOR MISSIONS TO AFRICA AND THE EAST.

Prepare ye the Way of the Lord.—ISAIAH xl. 3.

WE meet this day, as Members of the Church of England, to promote a design of evangelizing the Heathen; and sure I am, every true Member of Christ must be a hearty well-wisher to such a design. Whatever objection he may make to the manner in which it is taken up by us, or by any other body of Christians, still he must, from the bottom of his heart, adopt the language which we have been using this day in our service. 'God be merciful unto us and bless us, and show us the light of his countenance; that thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations:' Ps. lxvii. 1, 2.

This Prophet, who speaks so expressly of that light that was about to arise on the Gentiles, here predicts another herald who should 'go before the face of the Lord to prepare his way.' It appears from the terms employed in this and the following verses, that an evident allusion is made to a custom which still obtains in some parts of the East; where, on the approach of an illustrious Personage, his way is prepared before him by levelling mountains, by filling up valleys, and by removing obstructions of every kind.

'Prepare ye,' therefore, cries the Prophet, 'the way of the Lord;' or, as he elsewhere expresses it, 'cast up,

cast up the highway:' gather out the stones: lift up a standard for the people:' Isa. lxii. 10, and, for the encouragement of all those who shall be called to 'prepare this way' to the end of time, it is subjoined to the text, 'Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain; and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it'—"ALL FLESH," cries he, 'shall see it'—for it shall be revealed to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile.

Omitting such a general discussion of the text in its connection as might be proper on another occasion, I shall confine myself now to the special purpose of our assembling, namely, that of preparing the way of the Lord among the Heathen; and, accordingly, shall make a few remarks on their MORAL STATE—the MEANS OF THEIR RECOVERY—and the MOTIVES TO ATTEMPT IT.

Let us glance at that affecting fact.

I. THE MORAL STATE OF THE HEATHEN.

The field is so wide, that I shall not even attempt to give any thing like a comprehensive view: a single division in a sermon would not admit of this. A few facts, however, may suffice: because, from them, the general state may easily be inferred; and because select features strike the mind more forcibly than general descriptions.

But, in order to make a just estimation of the horrid *chamber of imagery* before us, we must proceed with the lamp of revelation in our hand. It is by this infallible light, that the 'dark places of the earth full of cruelty,' Psalm lxxiv. 20, are rightly apprehended.

Yet, as we enter into and explore the shades, we are confounded at the facts which present themselves.

For, surely, it must astonish the enlightened eye of a moral traveller, to observe, that, if some nations of the Heathen have made considerable advances in civilization and science, yet that their knowledge of the character of God, and of their moral wants and resources, has been but gross ignorance—that their ablest guides, 'professing themselves to be wise became fools,' Rom. i. 22—that their very Gods were scandalous; their worship ridiculous, cruel, and impure; and their morals abominable.

But, in taking a wider survey of the Heathen World, though such a traveller may be less surprised at finding the Sun and other celestial Luminaries the grand objects of heathen idolatry, yet how must he be shocked at beholding millions of rational creatures prostrating themselves before an Ox, a Crocodile, a Serpent, a Dog, an Ape, or some monstrous assemblage of their several forms? yea, before Vermin, before Vegetables,* and ten thousand other fantastic representations of Deity!

Nor are the objects of Idolatry more shocking than its *Rites*. "The Religion of the Heathen in this vast territory," writes a faithful and intelligent witness still living among them, "consists of little more than Lust and Cruelty."

With respect to the former of these, were I to attempt to give a particular description of the impure attributes and symbols of Pagan Deities, of the troops of prostitutes which form a part of their establishments, and of the various abominable means by which millions are held fast in their idolatrous bonds, such a description

* O sanctas gentes, quibus hæc nascuntur in hortis Numina!—*Juvenal*, Sat. 15.

would be evidently improper, and even dangerous. Such scenes are best described by the Apostle, when he says, 'It is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret:' Eph. v. 12.

But, if we advert to the Cruelty which idolatry mingles with its devotions, what less than a superstition worthy of Hell still keeps tribes of wretches fixed through life in tormenting attitudes, crawling under intolerable burdens, burning their scalps, piercing their flesh with hooks, like those of old, who 'leaped on their altars, and cut themselves with knives,' crying 'O Baal, hear us!' 1 Kings xviii. 26. Above all, what but the most diabolical infatuation could urge the Heathen to multiply human sacrifices, and bring even their innocent offspring for a burnt-offering to such a Deity as Moloch! and which murders them in incredible numbers unto this day.

But, if the *Theology* of the Heathen be so gross, what can be expected from their Morality? Even where little more of Christianity is found than the name, yet so has it raised the standard of morals, that pagan licentiousness is found intolerable in Christendom. Take a late instance of this in the conduct of our neighbours, the French. This people, after making the boldest experiment in profaneness ever made by a nation, in casting off its God; and who, for a time, seriously deliberated whether there should be any God at all; who, after madly stamping on the yoke of Christ, attempted to establish order on the basis of a wild and profligate philosophy—yet even *this* nation was at length obliged to bid an orator tell the abused multitude, that, under a philosophical religion, every social bond was broken in pieces; and that Christianity, or something like it, must be re-established to preserve any degree of order or decency.

And here let me remind *Females*, how much they owe in society to the diffusion of gospel light; and let me thereby attempt to stimulate *them*, to employ their influence in diffusing its healing beams.

Could you behold the cruel slavery and degradation of your sex in Heathen nations, I should scarcely need any other argument with *you*.

When a Missionary, in South America, was reproving a married woman of good character for following the custom of destroying female infants, she answered with tears, "I wish to God, Father, I wish to God, that my mother had by my death prevented the distresses which I endure, and have yet to endure as long as I live. Consider, Father, our deplorable condition. Our husbands go to hunt, and trouble themselves no further. We are dragged along with one infant at the breast, and another in a basket. They return, in the evening, without any burden: we return, with the burden of our children; and, though tired with a long march, are not permitted to sleep; but must labour the whole night in grinding maize to make chica for them. They get drunk; and, in their drunkenness, beat us; draw us by the hair of the head, and tread us under foot. And what have we to comfort us for slavery that has no end? A young wife is brought in upon us, who is permitted to abuse us and our children because we are no longer regarded. Can human nature endure such tyranny? What kindness can we show to our female children, equal to that of relieving them from such oppression, more bitter a thousand times than death? I say again, would to God that my mother had put *me* under ground the moment I was born!"

Observe, this was not a peculiar case, but a national custom. Ah! how remote from that recommended by

the benevolent and sympathizing genius of that Gospel which we would introduce among them!

Look again at another national custom, which, to this day, brings a widow, after having just closed the eyes of her husband, to be burnt to ashes at his side:—30,000 say some, 50,000 say others, of such victims perish annually in the East Indies.

You may, perhaps, be willing to hope that the moral state of the Heathen, indicated by these features, must be confined to a few remote parts of the earth. Alas! it is comparatively but a small part of the earth, where, in a greater or less degree, such superstition does not still prevail. Mahometanism has, indeed, removed some of its grosser features; but what has this imposture introduced in their place?

Infidels, perhaps, have told you that the moral virtues, at least, may be found in some parts of the world, where the Christian Faith is unknown: but representations of this kind have been proved, again and again, to be absolute falsehoods: and even allowing that any degree of truth attaches to such accounts, nothing more is to be inferred than that 'the strong man' uses specious methods 'to keep his goods in peace:' Luke xi. 21. The affected solemnity of one lunatic as fully discovers his actual condition, as the extravagant pranks of his fellow.

But, still, you may be ready to ask, "Has not even Christianity itself exhibited scenes, at which humanity shudders?" I answer, No: in no instance. Christianity is one thing: Popery, another. Christianity must no more be made answerable for its counterfeits, than its emblem Gold. It is one of the arts of hell to confound truth with hypocrisy. Real Christianity is that wisdom from above, which, is 'first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be intreated, full of mercy

and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy:' James iii. 17. But if, under this holy name, a bold Harlot comes forward in heathen attire, affecting the pomp, secularity, tyranny, and idolatry of Pagan Superstition, what wonder, if she adopts its *cruelty* also!

Let God, however, *be true: and every man*, opposing his declarations, *a liar*. He has described, by existing facts, and by every figure of speech, the blindness, depravity, and helplessness of fallen nature in the Gentile World: and, were it not that we are apt to read accounts till we forget their meaning, I need only to read the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans to show more fully the moral state of the Heathen. He, who cannot deceive or be deceived, hath assured us, that the darkness of the Heathen is so connected with wickedness, that, besides those crimes,* for which it is said 'the land itself vomited out her inhabitants,' it is added, 'Every abomination to the Lord which he hateth have they done: for even their sons and their daughters they burnt in the fire to their Gods:' Deut. xii. 3.

Add to these more conspicuous instances, the innumerable tribes which rove the vast deserts of Asia, Africa, and America—millions, who scarcely ever rise to an idea above the dictates of a corrupt nature. Scarcely excelling their cattle in intelligence, they sink far below brutes by their vices: and, yet, is there one of these less capable of rising, under the means of grace, to 'glory and honour, immortality and eternal life,' Rom. ii. 7, than ourselves?

See then the wretched state of those, to whom our labours are directed. Of God, of their moral state, and of futurity they know comparatively nothing. And their condition is the more deplorable, because man is

* See Lev. xviii.

obstinate in proportion as he is ignorant: the grosser his superstition, the more will he cleave to it, till God 'sends out his light and his truth. Prepare ye, therefore, the way of the Lord;' for till 'the Sun of Righteousness' arise on these nations 'with healing in his wings,' notwithstanding all the endeavours of Legislators and Philosophers, 'darkness' must 'cover the earth and gross darkness the people:' Isa. lx. 2.

This leads me to make an observation or two on,

II. THE MEANS OF THEIR RECOVERY.

One cannot help remarking here, on the confused and fruitless views of some pious persons. They are indeed struck with horror when the state of the Heathen is recollected. Like persons walking through a lazar-house, they pity from their hearts the different stages of malady which lie before them, but see no present remedy. They wait for some tide or motion, they know not what. Centuries have elapsed, and hundreds of millions of souls have passed into eternity—still they wait!

But it might be of use for such persons to inquire, "Does not God work by means? Does he not command them to be used, in 'preparing his way?' Has He not promised his blessing, in the use of them? How was the way of the Lord prepared among those Gentiles, now brought to the faith of Christ? Was not our own highly favoured nation as far from God as that of any other Gentiles? and is there not reason to think we should have remained Heathens to this day had the first Missionaries thus waited, or required some *perceivable* shaking among the dry bones before they prophesied in this our desert?"

I know of no difficulty now before a Missionary to the Heathen, that did not meet the first Missionary to this nation. We had our human sacrifices, as well as

others. Our hearts were as hard, and our prejudices as great, as those of others; and our situation more insulated and unapproachable than most of theirs.

The ablest means, however, and the best concerted plans, can, of themselves, do nothing. 'The glory of the Lord must be revealed,' in his mighty power, as well as in his saving truth, 'before all flesh can see the salvation of our God.' But, as the labour of the Husbandman is connected with the influences of Heaven in producing the harvest, so, in all other respects, it has been justly remarked that it is the *fool* only who expects the end without the means, since it is only in the use of appointed means that desirable ends are promised.

This Society, I can safely assert, mean to 'prepare the way of the Lord' by exhibiting the only remedy for fallen nature; the cross of Christ, and the regenerating influence of his Spirit; and that in the most simple and unequivocal manner possible. They have seen folly and disappointment inscribed on every *other* remedy, and on all unscriptural modifications of the true remedy; and that, in every age and in every *place;* and they depend alone, under God, upon 'the truth as it is in Jesus.'

To accomplish their end, it is evident that Missionaries must be employed among the Heathen: for 'how shall they hear without a preacher?' Rom. x. 14. But it may be necessary, perhaps, to admonish a sanguine and inexperienced zeal, to pay more attention than is usually paid at this day, to the words which follow, 'How shall they preach except they be sent?' *i. e.* How can it be expected that they should succeed in such a work, till God has called and qualified them for it? The work of a Missionary is as arduous as it is honourable: he is, in an eminent degree, a living sac-

rifice to God and man: he needs not, indeed, the learning and address of the Schools, but the higher attainments of divine knowledge and spiritual experience. Good men, like Moses, may be so sensible of the greatness of such an undertaking, and of their own inability and infirmities, that even when *really* called, they may err in standing back; but there are others, whom the Apostle would have rejected as *Novices*, lest their elation should end in their falling.* Such have a zeal, indeed, but without knowledge; either of themselves, or of the work which they would undertake. They are ready to cry aloud and spare not; but, too often, it is *vox et præterea nihil*, sound without sense. They distinguish not between business and bustle. Some truths, by *their* way of handling them, become unwholesome; being unmixed with a scriptural proportion of other important truths; this crudity, however, they mistake for 'the whole counsel of God;' and, regardless of admonition, confidently rush forward to declare it.

But what result can be reasonably expected from such an experiment? Evidently, as the fact has too often declared both at home and abroad, (and I am led to speak thus much, more from what has been observed at *home* than abroad) that the Gospel itself, under such an exhibition of it, would be rendered suspicious, if not ridiculous and abortive. Like the rashness of Israel at Ai,† such precipitance has not only brought shame and sorrow to the Church, but cause of triumph to its enemies. Thus Israel, at another time, fell before the Heathen, but thought the presence of their ark would support their cause. Their ministers brought it into the camp; and, in a spirit of vain confidence, they 'shouted till the earth rang again.' Alas! they had but the

* 1 Tim. iii 6. † Joshua vii. 4, 5.

Symbol of the divine presence, while God himself was departed from them. 'And the Philistines fought—Israel was smitten—the Ark of God was taken, and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phineas, were slain:' 1 Sam. iv. 10, 11.

Those who act with the purest designs (and I am persuaded each of the present Missionary Societies thus acts) cannot with all their care prevent the intrusion of specious but unsound characters. Yet we should recollect the commendation given to one of the first churches for their zeal in this respect: 'Thou hast tried them that say they are apostles and are not, and hast found them liars.' Such carnal Gospellers may, indeed, like those of old, 'take upon them to call over those who have evil spirits, in the name of the Lord Jesus;' but the evil spirit may be expected still ready to reply, 'Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are ye?' and will probably also 'prevail against them,' till they return from their rash attempts to exorcise the Heathen 'naked and wounded:' Acts xix. 14, 15, 16.

On the contrary, brethren, we should endeavour to find for our messenger, a man of God—instructed, experienced, holy, patient, laborious. This work peculiarly needs an apostolic spirit; and, for instances of this spirit, we need not ascend to the time of the Apostles. Look at the Missionary Swartz—one who has but lately been called to rest, after half a century spent in traversing thousands of miles, and that in a burning climate. Blessed with innumerable seals to his ministry, this man had acquired such a character among the Heathen, that when among a barbarous and lawless banditti—hordes that live by war and plunder, carried on against one another, and all around them; this man, I say, as one evidently engaged only on a heavenly design, was suf

fered to pass with his catechumen through contending parties of them, unsuspected, unmolested. They said, "*Let him alone. Let him pass. He is a man of God.*" This Apostle of our own day has saved the inhabitants of a fort from perishing by famine, when the neighbouring Heathen have refused to supply it with provision on any other assurance than that of his word. Even that tyrant, Hyder Ally, while he refused to negociate in a certain treaty with others, said, "*Send me Swartz—send me the Christian Missionary,*"—said this Mahometan: "*I will treat with him, for him only can I trust.*"

I make no apology for stating these facts in a sermon. I embrace them to demonstrate the importance of character in a Missionary. I am only sorry that the time will not permit me to enlarge upon them.

One fact more, however, I will mention. When the late Rajah of Tanjore was dying, and desired to commit his adopted son, the present Rajah, to this Missionary, and with him, of course, the care of his dominions; the Christian, after the example of his Master, was not to be dazzled by 'the kingdoms of the world, nor the glory of them.' He persuaded the dying prince to place the government of his son and of his affairs in other hands. But a greater honour was reserved for him, which he *could* not refuse: for, at his death, the present Rajah shed a flood of tears over his body, mourned deeply while attending his funeral, and has written to England for a monument which he intends to erect in Tanjore to the memory of his virtues.

God, indeed, needs neither the piety nor parts of such men as Swartz, Brainerd, and others of like mind, to effect his work; but he has made it evident that 'them that honour' him he 'will honour:' nor have we reason to doubt but that the faithful and zealous labours of the

Missionaries, sent by different Societies at this time among the Heathen, will be crowned with success—*will be*, did I say? they have been already. May God add to them a thousand-fold!

Among other *Means*, let us recommend to our Missionaries to dwell on such truths, as are simple and essential; that they carefully avoid positions, which remain doubtful even among real Christians; and that, while others only amuse or distract the flock, they should labour to *feed* it. "Certainly," says a great Author,* "as those wines, which flow from the first treading of the grape, are sweeter and better than those forced out by the press, which gives them the roughness of the husk and the stone; so are those doctrines best and wholesomest, which flow from a gentle crush of the Scripture, and are not wrung into controversies and common-place."

On the topic of *Means* I would also remark, that, while, through education and connections, the most upright and useful men will be found in different denominations of Christians—and while this diversity in circumstantials, when wisely and charitably conducted, may be overruled to the producing greater general effect (as the loadstone is found more powerful in parts than undivided)—so the greatest care should be taken that, in this variety of effort, a unity of design may be preserved. Each Missionary Society is our natural ally: we should cordially co-operate with it, so far as is consistent with our plan: we should rejoice in its success; and should carefully watch lest on any occasion a carnal jealousy should tempt 'Ephraim to envy Judah, or Judah to vex Ephraim:' Isa. xi. 13. By performing our own proper parts in the grand concert, we may give a greater force to the harmony. On the

* Lord Bacon.

contrary, if, influenced by narrow views, we waste our strength in weakening a common interest, certainly no greater gratification can be afforded to the prince of darkness and of discórd:—nothing can be more opposed to the mind of Christ. 'Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and we forbad him because he followeth not with us: but Jesus said, Forbid him not, for he that is not against us is for us:' Luke ix. 49, 50.

I am necessarily restrained, in a single discourse, from remarking on other *means* proper to be employed in this work, such as Translations of the Scriptures—dispersing useful Tracts—forming profitable Connections—and watching providential Openings, especially in countries under some civilization. These depend on a variety of circumstances, and will I doubt not be wisely regarded by this Society. I need not speak of pecuniary assistance, since the public liberality of Christians, on these occasions, is above praise.

One means, however, should never be forgotten: I mean fervent prayer to the Lord of the Harvest, that he would multiply those faithful labourers, which we now find such difficulty in procuring; that he would direct and support them in their labours; that, according to his promise, he would 'make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert:' Isa. xliii. 19. Without the arm of our God, we have painful experience how little we can do, even in our own families; and *with* it, we need not fear to 'prepare the way of the Lord' among the Heathen.

I therefore proceed to the last consideration, namely,

III. THE MOTIVES TO ATTEMPT IT.

1. The GLORY of GOD, surely, should stand first of these.

'The Lord hath formed all things for himself.' He

could propose no inferior end; and this, his glory, should be our prime motive. But with this grand end he has connected the salvation of sinners; and that, by such an astonishing display of his grace in Christ Jesus, as claims the affection of our hearts as well as the acquiescence of our understandings. On this ground let us join the Universal Church, in crying 'Thy kingdom come;' in seeking to promote this kingdom to the utmost of our power; in cherishing a holy grief and indignation, that ignorance and idolatry should cover so large a part of the earth, and that so little zeal should be felt for the advancement of the kingdom of Christ in a land partaking so largely of his benefits.

While, therefore, the enemies of God point the finger of scorn at this our attempt to 'declare his glory among the Heathen,' Ps. xcvi. 3, let us give glory to his name by trusting, that, at 'the blowing of his great trumpet, they shall come who are ready to perish,' Isa. xxvii. 13—'that, from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same, his name shall be great among the Gentiles,' Mal. i. 19—that He 'will say to the North give up, and to the South keep not back,' Isa. xliii. 6, till the knowledge of the Lord cover the earth.

2. The INFINITE WORTH OF ONE SOUL is another motive which should animate our zeal in an undertaking like this.

It has been justly observed, that a *present* salvation of all the individuals on the face of the globe would not be of equal moment with the *eternal* salvation of one soul; because there will arrive a period in eternity when that single soul will have existed as long as the lives of the former added together, and yet is still to exist. What then are the splendid projects of statesmen, war-

riors, or philosophers, compared with that of recovering an immortal spirit? The world's conqueror sat down and wept for another bauble; as well he might: he had no knowledge of any thing more valuable. But we know that the 'gain of a whole world' would not compensate for the 'loss of one soul:' Matt. xvi. 26. How noble a design, then, is that of the recovery of those who are as yet 'without Christ—strangers from the covenants of promise—having no hope, and without God in the world!' Eph. ii. 12.

3. Our OBLIGATIONS, AS ENLIGHTENED GENTILES, should be felt.

Many of us stand special witnesses of this truth. We are experimentally assured that the Bible in our hands is the Word of Life. We have the clearest evidence, that, if any principle of divine light or life be found in our own hearts, it has been received alone 'through the faith of the Son of God.' But to what end and purpose has it been received?—that we should look with indifference on the far greater part of the habitable globe, lying in the grossest darkness and wretchedness?—that we should pass on, like the 'Priest and Levite,' Luke x. 31, 32, beholding such misery with a cruel apathy?—that the faithfulness of God, in his promise to the Heathen, should be doubted?—that Satan should be suffered to proceed, uninterruptedly, in his work of deceiving the nations? What strange revolution has taken place in the Christian World, that its first converts should be more ready to lay down their lives for the Gospel, than *we* to enter into a plan for its propagation? Verily the zeal of some of the *dark* ages of Christianity will, in this respect, put us to shame.

Found among the oaks of our ancient Druids, with our painted bodies and bloody rites, if some Christian Missionary, pitying our wretched state, had not 'pre-

pared the way of the Lord' among us, we had probably remained in darkness to this very day. But God hath caused a great light to shine among us. 'Freely we have received:' let us 'freely give:' Matt. x. 8. Let us endeavour to remove that great stumbling block to the Heathen, I mean, the conduct of those Christians in name only, who appear on their coasts merely for traffic. Let us show them the effects of *real* Christianity. Let us prove, that, like its Author, it will spare neither cost nor pains to 'seek and to save them that are lost:'—that instead of offering violence to their persons or property, we seek not *theirs* but *them*:—that for their salvation, Christians are willing to be 'made a spectacle to angels and to men;—that being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, we entreat; and become all things to all men that we may by all means save some:' 1 Cor. iv. 9—12, ix. 22.

Thus, while the Sons of Earth (the slave traders particularly) entail an odium upon the very name of Christianity—and the Sons of Hell are endeavouring (and that with horrid strides of late) to root out the very remembrance of it from the earth, may we, as the 'Sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, shine as lights in the world:' Phil. ii. 15.

Some, indeed, have not scrupled to ask, "What have we to do with the religion of other nations?"—a question so strange to be proposed to a Christian Nation, that it is well if a real Christian can preserve himself so as to 'give an answer with meekness and fear:' 1 Pet. iii. 15.

For what *is* the religion of the Heathen? Have we not just seen it to be a 'chamber of the most abominable imagery?' To speak of the superstitions of the He

then, under the term *religion*, is to throw dust in the eyes of the ignorant. And what is our design in these Missions? Is it not to bring immortal souls 'from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by the faith of Christ!' Acts xxvi. 18. And does any one ask, "What have Christians to do with this?"

Suppose the millions, of which the Heathen World consists, to be sick, and that through a poison which was artfully introduced as a medicine, and which must destroy both them and their posterity:—suppose also that any one had a specific, and the *only* specific, which could relieve them under the effects of that poison:—I ask what notion the Objector would form of a person who should live and die with this specific in his cabinet, crying, "What have I to do with the remedies of other nations?" Would not he say, "This Querist has either no *faith* in his remedy, or no *feeling* in his heart?"

I see a poor Hindoo driven by a guilty conscience to inquire after an expiation; I see a Bramin directing him to cross a desert of a thousand miles to the temple of Jaggernaut in Orissa; and there, after the practice of severe austerities, to offer the costliest gifts, which he can present: he does all this; and, on his return, he receives a little consecrated rice: he attempts to subsist upon this, till, famished, he perishes on a plain,—white, to this day, with the bones of such deluded pilgrims. Is this romance? Nay, it is a well attested fact. But who among us, that knows the virtue of that 'blood which cleanseth from all sin,' who would not rejoice to seize the hand of this wretched votary, and say, 'Behold the Lamb of God!'

4. THE SATISFACTION OF HAVING MADE THE AT-

TEMPT, will be another, and that no slight motive, to the conscientious.

Events are God's. He for wise reasons, may run his dispensations quite counter to our well intended designs. He will, however, honour the intention, as he said in the case of David, 'Thou shalt not build me a house: thy son shall build it, nevertheless, IT WAS WELL THAT IT WAS IN THY HEART,' 1 Kings viii. 18—or in that of the woman who came with her box of ointment—'Let her alone, she hath done what she could:' Mark xiv. 6, 7, 8.

While, therefore, the Lord accepts our endeavours, we shall ever taste the satisfaction of having made them, whatever be the event. We shall comfortably reflect, that we are embarked under the sanction of a divine *precept*—a faithful *promise*—an irresistible *providence*—and a general disposition in the Christian World to join in the attempt. Our children may see a glorious harvest arise from the seed now sown: they may see it spread from nation to nation: yea and it shall so spread (whoever has the honour of sowing it), for the 'earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea:' Isa. xi. 9. Till this glorious event be accomplished, our hearts may rest in his bosom who gave it us in *promise*. It is enough for us now, that 'we have done what we could;'—done it, on the spur of a favourable occasion,—and done it in the only period in eternity in which such a work *can* be done by us.

There is, indeed, a class of men in the Christian Church, who are ready to damp every proposal, that does not originate with themselves, or stand recommended by high patronage. If 'we pipe to them, they will not dance: if we mourn, they will not weep.' "This scheme," say they, "is but Enthusiasm pursu-

ing its phantom. It is the project of a Party. It will come to nothing." A steady and consistent Christian will, however, pity this mixture of mistake and malignity: he will neither be surprised nor moved by such misrepresentations. He will consider the proposal itself, rather than the proposer. He will advert to its real worth and weight, the probable means of its success, and the motives which should actuate his heart in prosecuting it. Thus taking his well-considered stand, he will persevere by the help of his God; having this testimony in his conscience, that he does what he *can*, and would do better if he *could*.

I have reason to hope, Brethren, that most of you are thus proceeding: and thus may you proceed, till the awful hour arrives, when that only which is really substantial will comfort you! In that hour, when life is viewed as but a dream just vanished, when every earthly possession and enjoyment is departing, when your dearest friend can but say, "Farewell." In that hour, to be borne up by the faith of Jesus, and to feel the comfort of having stood a witness of its power to others—this will prove a solid satisfaction, which nothing beside can yield. 'Blessed are the dead, who thus die in the Lord from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them:' Rev. xiv. 13.

With the subject, as it respects the Heathen, I have done. Yet I cannot conclude without adverting to a common but fatal error. Too many are observed anxious to bring the Heathen to Christ, who yet give strong reason to fear they have not savingly approached him themselves. They are *zealously affected*, and that *in a good thing*—but seem never to have laid to heart how much that very thing is the 'one thing needful' for their own souls. "'Prepare ye the way of the

Lord,'" say they: "for till Christ is brought to a people they must perish for lack of knowledge." Most true! But most true it also is, that, till a people are brought to Christ, *they* too must perish, whether it be in England or in Japan. "All you can tell me," said one lately on a dying bed, "All you can tell me, I have long well known; but I tell you that I have lived without real religion. I was forward in the Church, but fixed in the world: and my profession now only serves to terrify me!"

O ye, who labour to build an ark for others, but enter it not yourselves—ye, who would convert the Heathen, but remain yourselves unchanged—tremble, lest even the most blind and profligate of those whom you would convert, should one day rise up in judgment against you. 'It shall be more tolerable, even for Sodom, in that day,' than for any among us who repent not: Matt. xi. 24.

On the contrary, may He, whose glory we seek in this Institution, enable us so to 'abide in Him; that when he shall appear we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming,' 1 John ii. 28; but, receiving then the full accomplishment of those promises for which we now wait, may we join in proclaiming, "THE KINGDOMS OF THIS WORLD ARE BECOME THE KINGDOMS OF OUR LORD AND OF HIS CHRIST, AND HE SHALL REIGN FOR EVER AND EVER!" *Amen.*

FUNERAL SERMON

ON THE

REV. JOHN NEWTON.

And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his Lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing.—LUKE xii. 42, 43.

I SHOULD not have ventured to appear this day in this place, and on this solemn occasion, but at the express desire of your departed Minister: nor can I think of any scripture which more suitably applies to his past character and present state, than the passage before us. May a divine blessing accompany our meditations on it; that we may not only 'mark the perfect man, and behold the upright,' but that our *end*, also, like his, may be *peace!*

Our Lord had said, v. 35, 'Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord when he will return from the wedding: that, when he cometh and knocketh, they may open to him immediately. Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord, when he cometh, shall find watching. Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.

'Then Peter said unto him, Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even to all?

'And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his Lord shall make ruler over

his household to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing.'

As if Jesus had said, "Though *all* have a general concern in the words which I have spoken, YOU, my disciples and ministers, have a special interest in them, and a particular obligation laid upon you by them. You are not only *servants* in general: but servants also of a particular description: you are placed as *stewards* over my household; having a peculiar and specific charge to execute. And blessed are you, if your Lord, when he cometh, shall find you executing it faithfully and wisely."

In the words of the text, taken in connection with those which lead to it, we have our Lord's view of the CHARACTER and COMMENDATION of a faithful Minister. He is represented in the text, both as a steward and a servant: as a SERVANT he is before described as vigilant and prepared; as a STEWARD, he is faithful and wise. Let us attend to both descriptions in this account of,

I. His CHARACTER.

The faithful Minister's character resembles that of a trusty *servant* watching the coming of his Lord. For even among men such a servant will not only consider his wages, but also the obligations which he is under. If his Master be from home, especially at a late hour, he will stand prepared to receive him on his return. If (as in the East) long garments are in use, he will have them *girded about*, that no impediment may prevent his activity. If the night requires a lamp or torch, it will be kept *burning*. He even watches his master's tread: he knows his knock: he springs to open the door: his very face welcomes him; and, whether his master comes at the second or third watch, such a ser-

vant complains not, he sleeps not, but steadily remains on his post. "I know not," says he, "at what hour my Lord may come; but I well know in what position he ought to find me." It is nothing to him, that other servants in the same house may be off *their* watch. Some may be absent, some gaming, some wasting their master's substance, some stealing his property, some abusing his character, and some quarrelling and fighting. But what is all this to Him? His thoughts are on his Lord.

Thus the vigilant and prepared servant, who is now called off his post, saw indeed and lamented the state of the household in which he had long kept watch: and faithfully protested against the neglect, carnality, and contention which he observed therein: but while he thus warned the unruly, his own heart was continually fixed on the coming of his Master. His own heart spake its real feelings, when he wrote that Hymn which you have often sung:

> "Fix my heart and eyes on thine,
> What are other objects worth?
> But to see thy glories shine
> Is a heav'n begun on earth."

Thus, I say, with his 'loins girded,' with his 'lights burning,' and looking for the coming of his Lord, departed JOHN NEWTON, servant of the Most High God.

But this *servant* is also described as a faithful and wise STEWARD; one set over the household of God, and expressly appointed to his office of administering therein. 'Let a man,' saith the Apostle, 'so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful.' But the Steward is not faithful, if he does not give the *due portion* to each:

not putting them off with half a meal. He is not faithful, if he regards the *quantity*, but pays no attention to the *quality:* it must be their portion of MEAT: it must be that which will support and *nourish* them. A Steward needs also to be not only faithful, but *wise*, that he may be able to discern both the portion of meat and the due *season* for delivering it. He must be *wise*, to mark the wants, complaints, and infirmities of the household: and he must be *wise*, to discriminate and patiently to bear the false charges and unkind remarks which he often hears while he thus acts faithfully and wisely. A minister is sometimes called to exercise a solitary faith and an invincible patience, in order steadily to proceed for the good of his Master's household, in the midst of the various cabals and impositions which he sees continually forming in it.

Thus acted your late Minister, 'as a good steward of the manifold grace of God.' He faithfully, as well as 'rightly, divided the word of truth' among you; giving 'their portion to each in due season.' He dispensed the word of God, and that only. He employed it as 'profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction,' and 'for instruction in righteousness.' Whatever men may plead for elaborate discourses, on moral goodness and the rewards of virtue, he determined to advance the doctrine of a Crucified Saviour, as the only hope and strength of fallen man; whose 'flesh is meat indeed,' and whose 'blood is drink indeed.' And he dispensed this, as one that had felt the power of it in his own soul, and tasted the savour of the *meat* which he delivered to others. A few of his hearers might, at times, come rather to find fault than to be fed; but he regarded not the person of men: he went on with his work, seeming to say with holy Herbert,

"Thou shalt answer, Lord, for me."

I think I may assert, without fear of contradiction from such as knew the character of your late Minister, that no man ever executed his office with a more *single eye*, or a more *disinterested heart*. Unlike that unjust steward in the parable, who, throughout all his management, merely considered how to keep himself from sinking under his delinquency, your late Minister considered simply the interest of his Master and his household. He might truly say, "'God is witness, that, instead of being burdensome, we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children: so, being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you not the Gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us. Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe. As ye know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children, that ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.'"

Ill-nature, indeed, might term this statement a *flattery of the dead*. But I confidently reply, No; in no wise. It is too late now to question the fact. Most of you know that I have stated but the simple truth, and that the truth itself demands this of me. This thing was not done in a corner, or in the presence of two or three interested witnesses; but it was done in the centre of the largest city in the world, amidst a multitude of disaffected witnesses, and before the eyes of the Church of God, to the members of which he might justly have appealed, 'Ye know, from the first day that I came among you, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons: serving the Lord with all humility of mind and with many tears and temptations:

and how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have showed you, and have taught you publicly and from house to house, testifying repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men; for I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.'

But the *character* and *commendation* of your late faithful and wise Steward must be referred to a higher bar of decision than yours or mine. The Judge of the world, who describes his character, pronounces what we proceed to consider—

II. His COMMENDATION.

'Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when he cometh shall find so doing.'

BLESSED, indeed, if he received no other commendation than THE APPROBATION OF HIS LORD.

'He, when he cometh, shall bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and then shall every man,' thus found faithful, 'have praise of God.' Sin has made such a bedlam of this world, that it is full of false associations. 'The precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, how are they esteemed as earthen pitchers, the work of the hands of the potter!' but, when the Master comes, he will say, (and it is enough if he says it,) 'Well done, thou good and faithful servant! thou hast been faithful over a few thimgs, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.' To set forth the special honour which Christ will put upon those servants who wait for his second coming, he employs, in the 37th and 44th verses, allusions to those ancient customs, where the master, at certain festivals, attended upon the servants, and afforded peculiar tokens of his respect and confidence to the faithful individuals among them. It is as if he had

said, in other words, 'Blessed are they which are called to the marriage-supper of the Lamb. Where there shall be no more curse; but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall serve him: they shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads. There shall be no night there, and they need no candle, neither the light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light, and they shall reign for ever and ever.'

BLESSED is such a servant, also, in THE TESTIMONY OF THE HOUSEHOLD, over which his Lord had placed him as a Steward.

Speak, ye who have been the seals of his ministry —'begotten again to a lively hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead!' Can ye refrain from pronouncing him *blessed*, who was the happy instrument of making you feel your *ruin* and your *relief?* Will not many of you, who have been warned, instructed, encouraged, and tenderly conducted as by a nursing father—meet him in the great day with heart-felt gratitude? You feel what you owe to his labours; and what a peculiar act of grace it was that placed you where the bread of life was dispensed in season, with integrity, wisdom, and affection. It matters not what others thought of your privileges: but it is impossible for *you* to think of them, and not to say, 'Blessed is that servant.'

BLESSED is that servant, likewise, in THE TESTIMONY OF HIS OWN CONSCIENCE.

I remember, on hearing a pious minister under depression, express some doubts of his own conversion, Mr. Newton replied, "Whatever I may doubt on other points, I cannot doubt whether there has been a certain gracious transaction between God and *my* soul. I cannot doubt whenever I look at my former and my pres-

ent objects, whether I ought not to cry, 'What hath God wrought!'" It was not the peculiar privilege of St. Paul, to say, 'I have fought the good fight: I have finished my course: I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the Righteous Judge, shall give me at that day:' for, observe the words following, where he adds, 'not to me ONLY, but unto all them that love his appearing.' Such a witness will not detract from the glory of God: he rather magnifies the power of his grace: he stands, like Legion, as a monument of it: and he will cry, after his boldest efforts to display it, 'Yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.' In the testimony of his own conscience, therefore, 'Blessed is that servant.'

One cannot help here contrasting the real state of such a servant with his reception among men. A real Christian, and much more a Christian Minister, is a character utterly unknown in the world. He reminds us of that Scripture, 'He, that is spiritual, judgeth (or discerneth*) all things, yet he himself is judged (or discerned) of no man:' that is, he knows *them*, but they do not know *him*.

It is, therefore, no matter of surprise, with the real servant of God, if he be scouted as a fanatic, by the profane; if he be scorned, by the proud; if his character be misunderstood by the ignorant; or if his doctrine be wilfully misrepresented, by the malicious. All this he is taught to expect; and all this, and much more than this, he is willing patiently to bear. For, as that 'faithful witness in heaven,' the moon, appears steadily to pursue its course among opposing clouds, cheering the pilgrim through the horrors of the night, while owls hoot and dogs bark at its splendour; so the

* ανακρινει, *discerneth.*

faithful witness on earth above mentioned, while he illuminates his particular station,—hailed by the children of light, but neglected, if not hated, by others,—will recollect how his Master was received, and that he testified, 'This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.'

Consider such a Minister coming to bring men from their state of apostacy back to God. If we regard the standard of truth on this point, and see the end of men, we shall learn, that 'many of them that sleep in the dust shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.' But, where are their instructors? and what is said of them? It is added, 'and they, that be wise, (or instructors, as the word signifies,) shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they, that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever.'

One cannot help viewing with grief the reception which such an Instructor meets with, when placed in the centre of a great city. In such a station he may present (as your late Instructor did) the inestimable treasure of the Gospel, not only on the Sunday, but in the course of the week. What then did you see? The Merchant rushes to the Exchange, heedless of his privilege: some friend points to the church as he passes, but he replies, "I have no time now: 'I pray thee have me excused.'" The Banker, engrossed with the 'gold that perisheth,' forgets that 'gold tried in the fire' which would make him really rich; and he also 'prays to be excused.' The Stock-broker hastens to his one object, and inquires of the first man he meets, "How are things now?" Would to God he knew! Would to God he had asked your late Minister as to the real state of things! things that infinitely more be-

long to his peace, than those which he seeks. The lady drives hastily by the church to purchase a toy, totally unmindful of that 'pearl of great price' now offered to her without money. In the mean time we are deafened with the clamour. Commerce, with its ten thousand voices, seems to cry aloud, "Money is the *one thing needful.*" Crowds passing to the *Temple of Mammon*, are ready to trample you under foot, as you endeavour to approach the *Temple of God.*

Besotted men! To pursue business is your duty; but to pursue that ONLY, is your crime. What! has Wisdom so long cried aloud among you for this? Has she uttered her voice 'in the chief place of concourse, that scorners should still delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? What shall it profit you?' cries her preacher, 'if ye gain the whole world, and at length lose your own souls? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?' Some, with a death-like apathy, pass the church, and say, 'He seems a good man:' others say, 'Nay, but he deceiveth the people: when will he die and his name perish?' We reply, NEVER. For at length the JUDGE HIMSELF rises up, and pronounces, 'Blessed is that servant—yea, blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching!'

'The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart; and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come.' HE SHALL ENTER INTO PEACE. The change of your late Minister is but a change of preferment: it is but the call of his Master to 'come up higher'—to take his harp, his palm, his crown, and bid an eternal farewell to all his cares and sorrows. Blessed are those servants; 'for God shall wipe all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, nei-

ther sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away.'

Having attempted to drop a few general hints on the CHARACTER and COMMENDATION of a faithful Minister, and having shown their application to your late Pastor, permit me to address a word,

I. To HIS STATED CONGREGATION.

Your vigilant and prepared Servant is now called off his post; your faithful and wise Steward is gone to deliver his account. He doubtless will do it with joy, having made it the grand object of his life. But let us consider, my dear hearers, the account which *we* also have to give. If special benefits involve special obligations, where are the people that have enjoyed your privileges? Some of you are his spiritual children, born and brought up in this House of Prayer. Many of you have been 'nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine,' as by a nourishing-father. Others have been warned to 'flee from the wrath to come,' as by a faithful monitor; and others cautioned by a guide who seemed in his experience to have explored the very 'depths of Satan.' The afflicted have been comforted: the doubtful have been relieved: and ministers (among whom I stand as a witness) have been enlarged and confirmed, as by a father in Christ.

Let us admire and adore the grace, which 'plucked such a brand from the burning,' and marvellously formed him afterwards to be that 'vessel of honour' which he became. Let us recollect to whom we are indebted for such a Steward; who, with wisdom and faithfulness, apportioned our meat in due season. And, if the remark of one of our divines be just, that "a faithful minister being taken away before the age of threescore is taken in judgment," let us stand encouraged, that the departed lived far beyond the age of man

before he was removed; and let us earnestly pray to the Lord of the Harvest, that this Church, which had been favoured with eminent Pastors long before the coming of your late minister, may enjoy a continuance of them till time shall be no more.

But infallible authority lays a ground for the comfort of every mourner in Zion when it enjoins, 'Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation,'* or as the word is, the blessed *departure* which they made; and more especially considering that 'Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.' He ever lives! He, the great 'Shepherd and Bishop of Souls,' will still provide for his flock; that 'where he is, they may be also.'

Mr. Newton gradually sunk as the setting sun, shedding to the last those declining rays, which gilded and gladdened the dark valley. In the latter conversations which I had with him, he expressed an unshaken faith in the eternal realities; and, when he could scarcely utter words, he remained a firm witness to the truths which he had preached. In so very gradual a declension, interesting particulars can scarcely be expected: should any be gathered, they will appear in the Memoirs of his Life, which I have collected under his direction; and which will further tend to prove the force of truth, the blessedness of its service, and the greatness of its present as well as future reward.

My honoured Brethren in the Ministry—'Servants, Stewards, Watchmen!' how much have we to learn on this occasion! What need to cry, 'My Father, my

* The word εκβασις, here rendered, *the end of their conversation*, is used but once more in the New Testament, 1 Cor. iii. 10, where it is justly rendered *escape*.

Father, the chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof! Let a double portion of thy spirit rest upon us? For *our* hour is also hastening: *our* account is soon to be given in: *our* Master is coming: *our* character will be proclaimed: *our* state will be fixed! Think on these momentous things. Think of your Lord's words, 'Be ye ready also: For the Son of Man cometh at an hour when ye think not.'

II. To his PARISHIONERS, also, I would address the feelings of my heart.

I speak more especially to such as have not duly appreciated the ministry of their late worthy Pastor. The worn-out body of him who long entreated you to be mindful of the day of your visitation, now is a mass of inanimate clay under that Communion-Table—his lamp broken—his tongue silent—

> "Disarm'd, disabled, like a wretch that's gagg'd,
> And cannot tell his ills to passers by,"

while he borrows my tongue to address you on the occasion.

And what can I say to you that he has not said a thousand times? I can only say, Lay the day of your visitation to heart, for God has spoken to you again and again by the mouth of his Servant. If he were to return from the dead, he could only repeat the same message; and then sigh and say with one of old, 'Oh that they were wise! that they understood this! that they could consider their latter end!'

Some of his parishioners have, I hope, felt the truth of his character; and are now convinced that he was that very man who kept his eye on his sacred rule, inquiring what sort of man the Minister of a parish ought to be. Since his death, perhaps you have been ready to say, 'Let me die the death of the righteous, and let

my last end be like his:' for the true minister is seldom fully known till he is gone. But let us allow something to imagination—Let us suppose your late Minister to rise like SAMUEL from the dead. Suppose him to learn that some of you, his Parishioners, had begun to recollect yourselves; had resolved to pray, to turn to God, to embrace his Son, and to obey the Gospel;—nay, that some of you were supposing that you even *do* serve God, because you begin to pay a formal attention to the externals of religion, and admit the general truths which he preached.

I ask, would he not say to such, like SAMUEL on another occasion, "Ye serve God! 'What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and this lowing of the oxen that I hear?' What meaneth this frequent breaking of the Sabbath, by business or pleasure? What meaneth this chosen friendship with the enemies of truth?—this idolatry of the world?—this strangeness to the active servants of your Lord's house?—this slighting of his children?—this neglect of his only begotten Son? Ye serve God! How is it possible to serve God through such days of vanity and nights of carnal amusement? Can this be the service of that God, who loathes a mere lip service?—who cries, 'My son, give me thy heart?—Oh that thou, even thou at least in this thy day,' knewest the things 'that belong to thy peace!'"

But I should apologize for the bare supposition of such a return from the grave; for 'there the weary are at rest:' as it is said in the Book of Wisdom, "The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God.—In the sight of the unwise they seemed to die, but they are in peace.—Then shall the righteous stand in great boldness before the face of such as have afflicted him, and

made no account of his labours. When they see it, they shall be troubled with terrible fear; and shall be amazed at the strangeness of his salvation; so far beyond all that they looked for; and in anguish of spirit shall say, This was he whom he had sometimes in derision, and a proverb of reproach. We fools accounted his life madness, and his end to be without honour; how is he numbered among the children of God, and his lot is among the saints."

Such a recall, therefore, of your late Minister to future labour on earth, is purely imaginary.—But, away with the phantoms of imagination, while certain realities demand our attention! I am bound to denounce a truth firmer than heaven or earth: I am bound to assert, that your late Minister SHALL return from the dust: not as a preacher, but as a *witness;* not as a warning voice, but as an unquestionable *evidence.* For 'the day cometh that shall burn as an oven, when all the proud and all that do wickedly shall be as stubble'—When these massy pillars shall give way!—When this temple shall be crushed in dust!—When these tombs shall be opened!—When these dead shall awake! 'Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation.'

Then will your late faithful Minister present his testimony to his Lord and Judge, respecting the impenitent of his charge. He will declare, "Near thirty years I stood on my appointed watch in the parish of St. Mary Woolnoth. I knew no rule, but thy word; and declared the message which thou gavest me. 'I hearkened and heard, but they spake not aright: no man repented of his wickedness, saying, What have I done!

Every one turned to his course, as the horse rusheth into the battle.' I called unto them from my *pulpit:* I sent warnings and invitations to their *houses:* I exhorted them as a *friend:* I cried as a *watchman:* I entreated them as a *father, Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die?*—O my God, thou that searchest the heart and triest the reins, THOU knowest this!"—May his parish also know it before THEY also follow him to the silent grave

My dear fellow-citizens and fellow-sinners, standing on the brink of an awful precipice! you *must* know, that to-morrow your cares, your sorrows, and your joys will be recollected but as a dream; and that the grand objects long presented to you from this pulpit will be then your only anxious concern. Remember, that the admonition before us respects not Ministers only. The conscience of every man before me is also addressed. The happiness or misery of every man is at stake. May God, of his infinite mercy, fix these considerations with a lasting impression on our hearts, for Jesus Christ's sake! To whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, now and for ever. Amen.

ON LINGERING IN RELIGION.

And when he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters, the Lord being merciful unto him, and they brought him forth, and set him without the city.—GENESIS, xix. 16.

IT has been often asked, "Whence came evil?" Wise men, however, will see, after the fruitless pains that have been taken to solve the difficulty, that He, who alone could solve it, has not thought proper to gratify curiosity in this respect. On such subjects *He giveth no account of his matters.* Wise men, therefore, will rather attend to that which He has made plain, and declared to be important, than attempt to rend a veil which He has purposely drawn over his holy retirements.

A matter of fact plainly appears:—Sin *has* entered in the world, and misery follows sin. From revelation we learn the nature and extent of this evil, or its *reign unto death.* Our grand inquiry, therefore, now should be, not, "Whence *came* evil?" but, "What is the remedy for that evil, which is already *come?*"

Wise men will regard the entrance of evil, as a man views a fire already begun in his house: it is too late now to ask, "How came this?" or, "Where did the fire begin?" His single question will be, how he, and his family and property, can be secured?

But, amidst the devastation which sin is spreading in the world, there is one effect of it to which this Scripture should particularly direct your attention, especially as it is not commonly noticed among men: I mean, its in-

fatuating, blinding, and hardening effect. Most men mark sin in the drunkard, the debauchee, the injurious, or the profane; but who detects its slower, but not less fatal poison, in carnal security—that deadly opiate, by which, not only the sordid and sottish, but the sensible and scientific also, sleep *the sleep of death?* Yea, by which the Christian himself is strangely detained and coufounded; and that, as we shall presently see, while he has a direct view of the most affecting prospects and consequences.

In this passage of Scripture, (which our Church has appointed as the Lesson for the day, in that season of the year when she calls her members to particular recollection and repentance) we are informed, that, after Abraham had interceded for Sodom, and Lot had admonished it both by his teaching and example, but in vain, two angels of God appeared, commissioned to destroy it. They beheld the outrageous abominations of the place, and found the measure of its iniquities now full. They said, therefore, to Lot—'Hast thou any here besides? Son-in-law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place. For we will destroy this place; because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the Lord, and the Lord hath sent us to destroy it.'

He did so. *Lot went out, and spake unto his sons-in-law, and said, Up, get ye out of this place!* But mark the infatuating effect of sin! they treated him as a dotard, or visionary. He urged danger, with every proof of its reality: he entreated them, no doubt, with the most lively emotions of terror and distress in his countenance: but *He seemed*, says the sacred historian, *as one that mocked unto his sons-in-law.*

Is this a singular case? Far from it. Let any one of us make the experiment: alas, we have often made

it! Let a man speak feelingly of the evil of sin, of the necessity of repentance, of fleeing from the wrath to come to the only hope set before us; let him choose his company for this purpose, not from the dissipated, but from the decent, the sensible, the formally religious: let him watch his opportunity: let him select his expressions: still what, I say, does experience allow us to expect from such an attempt, but a fresh proof of that infatuation recorded in the history before us? They are, at first, alarmed—they conjecture—they are hurt—and, at length, they smile! The serious Christian 'seems as one that mocks.'

From such persons, we naturally turn to those who know and acknowledge the importance of truth, and the necessity of acting from its principles: yet what plausible reasons do even these, like Lot, urge for delay!

From these general remarks, however, I shall direct your attention to one, in particular, which the text before us will serve to illustrate.

LINGERING NATURE NEEDS THE HAND OF SPECIAL GRACE TO RESCUE IT FROM IMPENDING RUIN.

The case of Lot himself, more than even that of his sons, seems to illustrate this observation. He was not only warned from heaven, and urged to arise without delay; but he knew that the fire was ready to fall—that another minute might be fatal. The angels hastened him, saying, 'Arise! take thy wife, and thy two daughters which are here, lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of this city.' Still he lingers:—'and, while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters, the Lord being merciful unto him, and they brought him forth, and set him without the city.'

He lingered—as if he had said, "A little longer—yet a little longer—to prepare for such a flight. Something, which I should take, will be left behind: something which I might yet settle, will be left in confusion. I am in confusion myself. I faint at the undertaking. Consider what a violence I sustain, in leaving part of my family, and leaving them in such a state. A little longer, if it be only to make one more attempt to awaken their minds. Who can tell, but they will hear, and escape with me! At least let me say, once more, Farewell, for ever!"

'But, while he lingered, the men laid hold on his hand,' and brought him and his family abroad, 'saying, Escape for thy life! Look not behind thee! neither stay thou in all the plain! Escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed!'

This is, indeed, my dear hearers, a striking illustration of our remark: but, as I before hinted, is it an uncommon one? Verily we are but contemplating human nature: we are looking but at man! at ourselves! God is continually rousing us by his Word, by his Providence, and by his Spirit, to awake, to arise, and to escape for our lives; and we are ever finding some excuse or other for lingering.

Jesus said to a certain man, 'Follow me:' but 'he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my Father.' The pretence for lingering is often very plausible, when the principle is bad. Jesus, the judge of motives, said unto him, 'Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.'

Another said, 'Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go and bid them farewell, which are at home at my house.' Could any, but the Reader of Hearts, have called this man a lingerer? Yet 'Jesus said unto him,

No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.'

Thus God calls to lingering nature; and, lingering nature constantly replies, with Lot, "'Oh not so, my Lord!' not so SOON—not so FAST—not so FAR. I cannot yet escape to the mountain: it is so distant: it is so high. There is a little resting place at hand: 'Is it not a little one?' May I not rest there, 'and my soul yet live?'"

Lingering nature will trifle with the favours, as well as with the terrors of the Lord.

But why do I dwell so much on the case of Lot, or talk of human nature in general as a loiterer? Let us descend into our own bosoms, and examine the fact at home.

The consciences of most of us who are here before God this day, bear testimony to the truths which we hear in this place. We have confessed that "we have erred and strayed like lost sheep"—that "we have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts"—and that "there is no health in us." We also know that nothing is more plainly declared in the Scripture which we profess to believe, than that, without 'repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ,' such sinners must perish eternally. We feel that the world is our grand snare, and that our time in it is short! how short we cannot tell! We know that there is no repentance in the grave; and that we cannot escape if we neglect so great salvation. We have, perhaps, noticed the blessed effects of this salvation, in the lives and deaths of some of our friends; and in the misery and ruin into which unbelief has plunged others. 'Let me die the death of the righteous!' may have been our cry: Let me 'so run as to obtain.' Yes, indeed, many among us have felt these

convictions: but who among us really lives the life of the righteous? Who actually runs the race set before him? Are there not many here present to-day, who, with such convictions, have not even yet SET OUT?

Say! am I speaking truth or not? Though God has long invited us, has not one bought a piece of ground, and must needs go and see it, and therefore prays to be excused? Have not others bought oxen, and must go to prove them? Has not a third married a wife, and therefore cannot come? Why not? a family-man, of all others, stands most in need of the helps and comforts of religion: he, therefore, especially should come; and bring his wife with him. No! the lingerer cannot come: he cannot bear to have his new pleasures interrupted: he cannot disturb the feelings of a family, or of a new connection. If they will stay in the city, he must stay there too; if they will stop in the plain, he can go no further; at least, for the present, he *cannot* come.

Thus men live; intending, at one time or other, to be wise. And thus, too often, they 'die without wisdom.' We set a time: the day comes; but new hindrances also come with it, and we cannot go forth. Conscience meets a fresh alarm: but now, perhaps, we are depressed: our spirits are in no state for exertion: we are drowsy with labour; we are unhinged by vexation: we are embarrassed by a connection; or we are in doubt about the way, and cannot go on till the doubt is removed: somebody offers to remove it, but we beg to have it discussed at a more convenient season. What is all this? Alas! it is lingering nature, which, if the hand of special grace does not seize, will perish in sight of the most awful prospects, and drivel on to destruction, buoyed up with vain purposes never to be performed.

This, my dear hearers, is some account of lingering circumstances like ours; but it is not the *whole* account. I should be unfaithful to you, as your Minister, if I described it only as Folly or Infirmity. It is much more: it is 'the deceitfulness of Sin: it is the Power of Unbelief; it is a Device of Satan: it is Sottish Idolatry: it is Ruinous Presumption, which, in sight of such prospects as ours, still lingers, and objects to the means of an immediate escape, crying with Lot, 'Oh, not so, my Lord!'

Does this seem strange to any one? Does he ask what he has to do with the case of Lot? what fire from heaven he need to fear? what warning he has neglected? I would ask such an one in return, Did you ever read your Bible? Is it not filled with awful warnings, addressed to the conscience of every one? Does it not threaten the impenitent and unbelieving with an infinitely more terrible destruction than that which threatened Lot? It was only his *body*, that was in danger—a body soon to be consumed by worms: but you are warned to fear, lest 'both body and soul' be 'cast into hell.' Lot was only in danger of having that family separated from him by an untimely death, which was soon to be separated by a natural one: but God hath warned you, that all 'those who know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord;' and, of course, shall be banished from the endearing society of their pious relatives, of their faithful ministers, and of all holy and benevolent spirits.

Oh wretched men that we are, who shall deliver us from this lingering unto Death! Let us thank God, through Jesus Christ, that an arm of special grace is still stretched out to perform this: though with grief

we must still cry, 'Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?'

But the report *must* be made, and therefore we proceed to consider our dependence on the arm of the Lord.

The history of Lot's escape is but a picture of our deliverance by the power of grace. The angels had not only warned him, but they now hasten his escape: and, while he lingers, they lay hold of his hand, ('the Lord being merciful unto him') and bring him without the city. And even now they urge him onward; crying in his ears, 'Escape for thy life: look not behind thee: stay not in the plain: escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed.'

Who does not observe here, divine grace extended like an arm from heaven, to pluck a brand from the burning? Who can avoid remarking, with St. Peter, on this very fact, that 'the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, while he reserves the unjust to be punished?'

The gracious arm was much more than that warning voice, which others had heard, as well as they who escaped. Methinks I see Lot resting in his cave, and thus instructing his daughters, while 'the Lord rained upon Sodom and Gomorrha brimstone and fire'—"Behold, my dear children, 'the smoke of the country go up as the smoke of a furnace.' Where now are the mockers? I lingered, indeed, myself; but 'the Lord being merciful unto me,' he has brought us hither. Your poor mother looked back, and remains an awful monument in the plain. Let us never forget that we also are monuments, but monuments of another kind, —monuments of grace. Let us often visit the pillar of salt, to keep alive a holy fear in our heart; lest, after all, we perish by a worse destruction. And, while we

cannot help dropping our tears at the sad memorial, let us return to our cave admiring and adoring that arm of special grace, which rescued us, while lingering in sight of impending ruin."

This temporal deliverance of Lot, may stand as an emblem of every true Christian's spiritual deliverance. The WORD of God is that warning voice, by which 'many are called:' The HOLY SPIRIT's influence is that mighty power, by which 'few are chosen.'

Do you say "This is strange?" I say it is a MIRACLE!—a miracle which God continues to work, or Ministers would labour in vain. And, considering its important consequences, it is the most glorious of his miracles. It was for this influence that St. Paul asked, when he prayed that the Ephesians might not only have 'the eyes of their understandings enlightened, to know the hope of Christ's calling,' but that they 'might also know what is the exceeding greatness of his power to those who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead.' He tells them, that it was by this power, that they had been 'quickened when dead in trespasses and sins;' and which had 'raised them up, and made them sit together in heavenly places in Christ;' and that they remained as 'God's workmanship,' and stood as monuments that, 'in the ages to come, he might show the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness toward them, through Christ Jesus.'

Here is MYSTERY too:—The answer, which our Lord gave to Nicodemus, is sufficient for us to give, when men put questions like his: 'The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.'

Here, also, is MANIFOLD WISDOM: adapting various means to effect one grand design.

Sinking nature is ready enough to make vows in trouble, and sluggish nature is apt to forget them after deliverance. Thus Jacob had set up a pillar to the God who appeared for him at Bethel, and had vowed, that, when his present hopes were accomplished, he would remember his helper, on that very spot. The God of Bethel was faithful to his promise, and did far more for Jacob than he had asked; but Jacob forgot his vow, till he was roused long after with, 'Arise: go up to Bethel, and dwell there; and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee, when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother.'

Moses, eminent as he was, was yet found among the lingerers, who need stimulating to duty. He was ordered to go forth and speak in God's name: but Moses said, 'Oh, my Lord, I am not eloquent:' Divine Condescension at first reasoned with him:—'Who hath made man's mouth? Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say:' but Moses continuing still to object, Divine Wisdom then assumed a frown, and drove the lingerer on his way. Soon after this even Moses loiters again: he neglects the divine appointment of circumcising his son; he had, doubtless, some plausible family reason for the delay: but 'the Lord met him by the way in which he went,' as with a drawn sword, and forced the parent to a performance of his duty.

Thus, to this very hour, is a Manifold Wisdom employed, in contriving means to drive or draw us on our way. Sometimes an alarming providence rouses the sleeper from his lethargy, as it did Jonah: sometimes a still small voice, after the storm, invites us to come out and meet the Lord, as it did Elijah: sometimes a friend-

ly hint of encouragement carries us forward, as it did Jacob, trembling to enter Egypt, till he heard it said, 'Fear not to go down, for I will go with thee:' and sometimes the deadly snare into which one loitering, like David, is apt to fall, is made at once his scourge, his warning, and his cure.

Thus wisdom crieth aloud, in a variety of ways: and sendeth by a variety of messengers; each as an angel charged to exhort us, "'Up:—get ye out of this place:' this is not your rest." Sickness, losses, fears, disappointments, deaths,—what are these, but angels' hands taking hold of the lingerer ('the Lord being merciful' while he seems severe), bringing him forth, and crying, —'Escape for thy life: look not behind thee: neither stay thou in all the plain: escape to the mountain lest thou be consumed.'

Humbly as your Ministers ought to think of their attainments, they are bound to magnify their *office*: an office similar to that of the angels in the text, 'knowing the terrors of the Lord, we persuade men.' In order to be faithful, they must try by all means to rouse the lingerer. Their patience, indeed, will bear with his peevishness: their love will accommodate, so far as it dares, to his prejudices: they will pity his worldly attachments, wait for his deliverance, and pray for his success. But in the mean time, they dare not cease to cry in the ears of the lingerer, 'Up, get ye out of this place.' Sometimes the message does little more than disturb men: they try to free their hand from the hand of him who would lead them from ruin; they promise to hear at a more convenient season: they demand time for moving: 'A little more sleep, a little more slumber, a little more folding of the hands to sleep.'

Hence we may account for many objections that are made to our labours. The sermon is too long, or too

loud, or too harsh, or too personal: the language is coarse, and the application legal. In some cases, the charge may be just; but, more often, the truth is too plain and too pointed for such as would be at rest in their sins. Faithful addresses seldom please loiterers.

But, if the messenger be really in earnest to save himself and them that hear him, he will not cease to cry, 'Arise! take thy wife and thy children, lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of this city.' He will not forget, at the same time, that his sole dependance for success in rescuing a single hearer, must be in the presence of a divine power. Without such aid, there is not one among those, who now

——"Walk
High in Salvation, and the climes of bliss"—

but would have lingered unto destruction in the city, or stood a pillar of salt on the plain.

Still it remains a melancholy matter of fact, that one class of our hearers continue to treat these truths as a fable. Another class are alarmed, and set out, but afterwards *look back*, and perish. A third class are fully resolved to proceed; yet sadly linger on the way. I shall, therefore, conclude this Discourse with a word to each of these classes of hearers.

1. Let me ask THOSE WHO TREAT THESE TRUTHS AS A FABLE, Do we appear mockers, because we attempt to rouse you from your fatal security, and charge you, on the authority of God's word, to *escape for your lives*?—Why is it?—ask your own hearts—why is it that these words seem to you now, as they once did to the sons of Lot, 'Like the words of one that mocketh?' Is it, because, instead of sending two or three witnesses, as he did to them, God hath sent a 'cloud of witnesses' to you?—Is it, because he hath set his seal to their testimony, while he writes folly and confusion upon all

other attempts to enlighten and reform the world?—Is it, that he hath fulfilled a long chain of prophecy; and added thereto his wonders, signs, and mighty deeds?—Is it, that, in these last days, 'he hath spoken to us by his Son,' and striven with our consciences by his Spirit?

No! these are not your reasons—these are not the marks of 'a cunningly devised fable.' Men tremble when they *seriously* attend to the evidences of our faith. Some of us can speak from experience, who once sat with you 'in the chair of the scorner.' We can well remember, that, while company was present and vanity afloat, we could sport with the warning, and treat the messenger as a mocker; and, as well do we recollect with what difficulty the remonstrances of conscience were suppressed. Truth would force its way into our retirements, and bring a thundering charge into the conscience of the trembling liar, of 'Know thou, that for all these things, God will bring thee into judgment.'

You are young, perhaps; and some profligate writer or companion has injured your minds. Every age has been infested with such men; but it is the reproach of the present age that it swarms with them. Like the frogs of Pharaoh, they 'cover the land and smite all the borders of it:' they corrupt the streams of literature and conversation; and cause the land to stink after they are dead.

The very character of these persons will help you to detect their design. 'Do men gather grapes of thorns?' Their spirit and conversation, their obstinacy and malignity, mark the class to which they belong.

Ask yourself, how you would expect that such men should treat that holy and humbling record, the Bible

—that light in the night, which disturbs these robbers —that witness, which convicts them—that law, which condemns them, and calls for their execution—How would you expect such men as these to treat the Scriptures?

Suppose, for a moment, that you yourself became a truly religious man, what would the men of whom I have been speaking say of you? How would they treat your wise and pious resolutions? What construction would they put upon your hopes, your evidences, or your motives? You know, you *must* know, that what they dislike in the Bible they would dislike in *you*. They would begin to misrepresent, revile, and sneer: they would treat you as a fool, or a hypocrite. But would this form any solid objection to your real character? Could it be called argument? Could it be common sense? What then is the opposition which they make to the Scriptures?

To close this digression—if the unbeliever has genius, he will add brilliancy to his scorning: if he be a scholar, he will conjure up by metaphysics or criticism a lying spirit to deceive such as, like Ahab, wish to be deceived. And, if neither genius nor learning assist, he can at least new shape old objections, though these very objections have repeatedly received a satisfactory reply.

Well would it be, indeed, for those who are caught by such works, if they would reflect, that God also is executing *his* work; that 'the deceiver and the deceived are his;' and that the most awful judgment which he can inflict here, on such as 'receive not the love of the truth,' is to 'send them strong delusions, that they should believe a lie.'

Still we seem 'as those that mock!' But bear with me, Brethren, while I point out to you the *real* mocker. It is not the Minister, who watches for your souls, and

would rouse you to action; but it is one, who, 'like a strong man armed,' would 'keep his house and goods in peace.' *He* is the mocker, who is still found repeating his ancient falsehood, 'Ye shall not surely die.' But, 'be not deceived; God is not' to be 'mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. He that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he, that soweth to the spirit, shall of the spirit reap life everlasting.'

Up, therefore, get ye out of this state. It is God who calls *you* now, as He once did the sons of Lot. Had they attended to his warning, they would have been brought out by the same hand, which rescued their father. But they scorned the warning; and were therefore left without excuse. Such is your case. God hath sent you a message this morning: he hath promised his gracious assistance, if you ask it; and therefore leaves you without excuse if you neglect it; and 'how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation!'

2. One only perished on the plain before Sodom: but I fear the number of those is not small, whose cases resemble hers. Such, then, AS ARE TEMPTED TO LOOK BACK, I address as a second class of hearers.

You, to whom I now speak, have, perhaps, not only long attended our ministry, but profess also to honour the Gospel which we preach. You are shocked to hear it despised, and lament that it should be so often misrepresented. "God forbid," say you, "that I should ever be found sitting with the scorner; that I should be negligent in ordinances, or erroneous in doctrines. I have seen the benefit of true religion in others; and have felt something of its power myself. Its importance cannot be urged too strongly; for 'what would it

profit a man, if he should gain the whole world and lose his own soul?'

Your experience goes, perhaps, still further than this. You could tell of your having joined prayers to your endeavours. You could speak of the conflicts which you have felt between sin and conscience;—of the efforts which you have made to break with the world, and escape to the mountain; that you actually set out; that you once outran others.

But say, how is it now? If you once ran well, has nothing hindered you? Are you not looking back to the city, whence you set out? Has not some temptation made real, vital, practical religion seem a task? Has not the love of this world left only the mere *form* of godliness, after it has eaten out the power of it?

How many—I speak it with sorrow—how many have I noticed, who, while puffed up with the change of OPINION, were yet careless about a change of *heart!*—eager to follow a new preacher; but thoughtless of a new state of life!—ready to dispute about free-will or free-grace; but deplorably unmindful that 'the grace of God, which bringeth salvation, teacheth us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.'

'But if, after men have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.' They have not only 'looked back,' but stand, as it were, already 'a pillar of salt' to the wise, and a stumbling-block to the foolish. May every one of you, my dear hearers, be delivered from so fatal an error! 'Look not behind thee.'

But, supposing that you are not thus looking back to the *city*, do you stay in the *plain*? that is, do you

deem it sufficient that you have departed, in many respects, from the habits and maxims of a careless and corrupt world? Do you rest in a decent, formal, traditional religion, like that of the Pharisee? satisfied with merely PROFITING ABOVE YOUR EQUALS—that you are regular in your devotions, consistent in your character, admired by many, and charitable to all? Do you boast of a good heart; though you have never yet been taught by the Spirit of God the guilt and deceitfulness of the heart, the spirituality of God's Law, the necessity of repentance, and the only hope of escaping by faith in Christ Jesus? Still worse, do you obstinately resolve to harbour no suspicion of being in danger? do you stand proudly determining to reject all admonition, respecting your state, whether from your Friend or Minister? Alas! you *stand* indeed; but you stand still: you stand on the plain. Whatever you have left in the city, you have not escaped to the mountain; I mean to that rest, rock, and hiding-place, which God hath pointed out for safety to perishing sinners. For 'he shall be for a sanctuary to' the believer; though for a 'stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence' to others. God grant that he may never prove such to any of you!

If, however, the words of the servant make but a slight impression upon your hearts, Oh may the express words of the Master be duly regarded, when, with reference to the danger of loiterers, he says, REMEMBER LOT'S WIFE!

3. I conclude with addressing the third class of persons, who ARE FULLY RESOLVED TO PROCEED, YET LINGER ON THE WAY. Who, indeed, among us all, lingers not? However sincere in our profession, however convinced in our judgments, however resolved in our determinations, however injured already by our delay, yet, who among us lingers not?

The preacher, I am sure, must plead guilty. The thought of standing up before such a congregation as this, is always accompanied with considerable weight on my spirits: but yesterday it was such, as led me to say in my family, "I cannot make a sermon for to-morrow: I am too much depressed to attempt it. Besides, I have been turning the Bible over and over for a subject, and cannot find one. I must take some printed discourse: at any rate, I can make none: and their candour will admit of an apology."

Ah! lingering, lazy minister! read a printed sermon! make apologies for sloth! find no subject! What, no subject, when sinners are perishing around you: when faithful witnesses are so scarce, and false witnesses are labouring to root out all remembrance of truth from the earth! No subject! when thy dying breath will soon be in thy nostrils, and the door of thy opportunity soon be shut for ever!

Who does not join his confession to mine, and cry 'Oh wretched man!'

Thus admonished by truth and goaded by conscience, we slowly make our way. Some of our hindrances are inevitable; but too many are *invited*,—are *purchased*,—are even *boasted* of, till, at length, our breath fails, and some one tells a neighbour, "*He is dead.*" "Dead!" replies the other: "I did not hear that he was sick! How did he die?" "Why 'careful about many things;' lingering as to the main thing: he had scarcely time left to set his House in order; God only knows how it was with his Heart."

If, however, as Christians, we thus meditate upon our weakness and danger, it is not that we may sink under discouragement, but that we may quicken our pace, and to bring forward and exalt our remedy—it is that we may 'exhort one another while it is called to-day, lest

any be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin'—it is in order to our uniting in the cry, 'Awake, Awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord!' With such views and means, we shall be able to say, with the Apostle, 'When I am weak, then am I strong.'

Nor let us stumble, as we are too apt, at the Providence which is often sent to fulfil a Promise. You, to whom I am speaking, certainly pray in Christ's name, that God would deliver you from this evil world—that he would not let you rest in sin—that he would bring you on your way to heaven; and that he would choose the proper means.

But, has he really heard thee; and, in very faithfulness, sent some messenger to deliver thee, but such an one as alarms thy fear? Fear not, it is but an Angel's arm stretched out to conduct thee onward; a voice crying, 'Escape for thy life.'

Recollect, that, whatever be the means, which God employs to break our idolatrous attachments, and bring us on the heavenly way, though others call it a loss or a disappointment, a disease or a death, let us call it an angel's hand—let us call it the voice of Christ, saying, 'As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten; be zealous, therefore, and repent.'

'See, then, that ye refuse not him, that speaketh;' nor draw back from him, that layeth hold on thy hand, the 'Lord being merciful unto thee.' Rather, let us recollect, that though we linger, time lingers not—death lingers not—judgment lingers not! May every heart be lifted up to God this morning, that the arm of special grace may be stretched out to deliver us from a lingering spirit! Let us depart praying; and forming new resolutions to retire and seek that grace, which alone can seal the admonition of this day upon our hearts.

ON THE CHARACTER OF HANNAH.

And she said, O my Lord, as thy soul liveth, my Lord, I am the woman that stood by thee here praying unto the Lord. For this child I prayed: and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of him.—1 SAM. i. 26, 27.

TRUE Religion, my dear hearers, is, while on earth, a heavenly plant in an unfriendly clime. It has to struggle with soil and season; and often meets a malignant blast that would bring immediate death to it, were it not for the care of the Husbandman. He watches and shields it, who will soon transplant it to a happier region, where it shall flourish for ever.

This plant is distinguished from such as bear some resemblance to it, by the ROOT, the CULTURE, and the FRUIT. In other words, by comparing what God teaches his children, with what he works in their hearts and produces in their lives, we come to learn what real religion *is*, and what it is *worth*.

In this view, the short memoirs recorded in the Bible, become inestimable demonstrations of its principles. In them we see true religion embodied, alive and in action: we observe how it feels and speaks; how it first endures, and at length conquers: and we are thus enabled to distinguish it from those mere forms, farces and counterfeits, with which it is surrounded, and which seek to gain credit under its sacred name.

Should any one ask, "Where, after all, is the true religion?" we answer, it stands before us this day in the character of the woman, 'who being dead yet speaketh' in the First Lesson of this Morning's Service.

Her husband had fallen into an error too common in those times: he had departed from the divine institution which makes of 'twain one flesh;' and had met the consequences of his sin in a distracted family. Hannah had no children; and was insulted by Penninah on that account, year by year, as she went up to the House of the Lord. Daily vexed and reproached by her adversary, she wept, and did not eat: her husband endeavoured to comfort her; but this was one of those many cases, in which God teaches his children, that he is their only portion and refuge.

She went up to worship with her husband; but she had a secret transaction with her God: she had griefs to pour into his bosom, where even an affectionate partner or faithful minister could not be admitted. Spiritual religion is an affair between God and the soul, that is principally transacted where no eye sees.

'She was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the Lord, and wept sore;' and, as she continued praying before the Lord, Eli, the Priest, who sat near, marked the motion of her lips. He probably observed in her much agitation of spirit, but surely nothing that could excuse his rash judgment and groundless charge. Her meek reply, however, soon convinced him that she was indeed 'a woman of a sorrowful spirit, who was pouring out her soul before the Lord;' and he was influenced to say, 'Go in peace and the God of Israel grant thee' (or, as it should be rendered, *shall grant thee*) 'thy petition that thou hast asked of him.'

The occasional mistakes and infirmities of ministers do not destroy their authority. She passed by the infirmity of the Man, and believed the report of the Minister. She said, 'Let thy handmaid find grace in thy sight. So the woman went her way, and did eat, and her countenance was no more sad. And the Lord re-

membered Hannah, and she bare a son, and called his name Samuel, saying, because I have asked him of the Lord.' She afterwards went up with him to the house of the Lord in Shiloh, and brought the child to Eli, and said, in the words of our text, 'O my Lord, as thy soul liveth, my Lord, I am the woman that stood by thee here praying unto the Lord. For this child I prayed, and the Lord hath given me that petition which I asked of him.' She fulfilled her vow in returning the gift to him who gave it; uttering a grateful and joyful acknowledgment on the occasion, in testimony, that, however she prized the gift, she rested only in the Giver.

I shall pass by other truths contained in this subject, that I may direct your attention to the following remark:—

TRUE RELIGION IS A DIVINE LIFE IN THE SOUL, WHICH ITS AUTHOR FIRST TRIES, AND THEN HONOURS.

True religion, I say, is "the life of God in the soul of man." The Holy Scriptures continually employ images taken from the natural, to give us ideas of the spiritual and eternal world. We see a life in plants, and a life of a superior kind in animals: we see a life of a still higher order in rational creatures: but we are taught of God to seek a divine and spiritual life, to which the mere rational, though carried on to its highest point of improvement, can never attain. Much as we may admire celebrated geniuses of ancient or modern times, the Scriptures teach us, that while they continue in unbelief and destitute of the love of God, they are but SPLENDID WRETCHES, and *dead while they live.*

What then is that higher order of life, which may be called Divine?

I answer, it is a life of FAITH, by which a sinner, renouncing all other dependance, trusts alone in the full and free promises of his God.

It is a life of HOPE, by which, as with an anchor, he is kept sure, steadfast, and expectant amidst the storms of a disordered world.

It is also a life of LOVE, by which he is united to God as his portion, to his word, to his ways, and to his children; and by which he forgives and prays for his bitterest enemies. It is the mind of Christ, yea it is 'Christ in us the hope of glory,' and it is the foretaste of that glory itself. We may give laboured accounts, and employ the most striking images to convey ideas of this divine life, but the Author of it assures us, that, 'except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.' To fully understand Christianity, we must be Christians. To know what a natural life is, we must be alive; and rightly to conceive of spiritual life, we must possess it: and until men do possess it, they will go on mistaking, and probably despising it. Learned and sensible when conversing on other topics, this lies out of their observation and experience, as to its nature, its author, or its subjects: 'therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.'

But, however these things may be misunderstood, and of course reviled, 'Wisdom is justified of all her children.'

One of these children of wisdom is presented this day to our observation.

Hannah had long mourned under a grievance, which seems to have been peculiarly felt in those times. 'The heart knoweth its own bitterness;' and we may recollect that some of the sharpest trials we ourselves have endured, could not be fully explained to others.

But how does she act under this? Does she, like

many, who, if they are crossed, fall into murmurings against Providence, quarrel with the affliction, cast the blame on every body but themselves, and nurse a peevishness and impatience that God himself cannot please? These are signs of spiritual death, but she had 'passed from death unto life:' she had the life of FAITH, which seemed to say, 'Though he slay me, yet will I trust him.' She sees the hand of God in her affliction; and she bows before it in the bitterness of her soul: she takes hold of it, yea she hangs upon it, by the life of HOPE. She is chastened by a father; but the life of LOVE in her flies to him as a father, and pours her soul into his bosom.

'Her adversary provoked her sore to make her fret.' That affliction is very heavy, which is not only within the house, but comes from a partner in it; yea which, tearing away the only pillow of repose, follows us into the Sanctuary *itself*. It is like that ingenious torment, which is said to be the greatest ever invented by man, of constantly preventing a wretch from sleep. Her adversary thus sorely provoked her: but do you read of her returning any provocation? 'Being reviled, she reviled not again:' when she 'suffered,' she 'threatened not, but committed herself to him that judgeth righteously.' Such as have 'put on Christ' by a divine life of faith, hope, and love, have 'put off the flesh, with its affections and lusts.'

We observe her thus ascending with her husband to worship. She was doubtless sensible of his piety, kindness, and sympathy; but, like a spiritual worshipper, her main business was with God Himself. Nothing less than real and personal communion with God will satisfy those 'who worship him in spirit and in truth,' and who mark his hand in all their affairs. Whatever respect they pay to the temple, services, and minis-

ters of religion, their grand affair is with the 'God of all.'

We follow her into the temple, and behold her now falling before him 'who dwelt between the Cherubims.' The world is shut out; and here, in the solemn, silent, and secret place of the Most High, she talks to him as one well known—she wrestles with him like Jacob—she seems to say, 'I will not let thee go except thou bless me.' In the House of God, at the very 'gate of heaven,' surely there is repose for the weary soul. Alas! to stand on *this* side the gate of heaven, is not to be out of the reach of trouble.

'Eli, the Priest, sat upon a seat by a post of the temple of the Lord,' and was to be a further trial of the reality of the heavenly life which animated her soul.

Heavy, indeed, is the burden of that pilgrim whose guide is himself misled; and who, from negligence or mistake, adds to the weight which he should alleviate. Mere professors of religion will take occasion from defects in the ministry to revolt. They will hastily conclude, that, because the Priest is wrong, God and his ways are not right. A stumbling block is thrown in their way, at which they fall and are broken, though God had long warned them of it by his Prophet.*

But it is one of the privileges of that divine life of which we are speaking, that it is prepared to meet errors, by an inward and satisfactory experience of the truth. Hannah's trust was in God, not in Eli: she saw him in an error, but knew her Best Friend could not err. Accused, and probably shocked at such a charge as that which Eli brought, she neither forgot God, herself, or her minister; but, with deep humility and unfeigned reverence for his office, she puts forth the

* Is. xxviii. 13.

genuine fruits of that Spirit who had made her alive to God.

Eli said, 'How long wilt thou be drunken! Put away thy wine from thee. And Hannah answered and said, No, my Lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit: I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the Lord. Count not thy handmaid for a daughter of Belial, for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken hitherto.'

Grace so softens and sweetens the heart, that its genuine expressions under provocation often rise to a sublimity and tenderness, which make the language of poets and orators seem but vulgar and unmeaning artifice. It is not, however, my design to dwell on the beauty and pathos of her reply, but to exhibit 'those fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God,' and which demonstrate a heavenly life in the soul: those fruits, which, as our Church expresses it in her XIIth Article, "Spring out necessarily of a true and lively faith, insomuch, that by them a lively faith may be as evidently known as a tree discerned by the fruit."

Happy, though afflicted woman! who could thus stand as a witness of the life of religion; while the sons of Eli were bringing a scandal upon it by their avarice and debauchery at the very altar; and while their pious father himself was negligent as a judge, and mistaking as a minister! Happy witness! who could turn from professors and profane, from trials in the house and scandals in the Church, and commit herself to him that judgeth righteously, with, 'Thou God seest me. —Thou knowest my sorrows.—Thou knowest that I love thee.—Put my tears in thy bottle.—Show me a token for good, that they that hate me may see it and

be ashamed, for thou Lord hast holpen and comforted me.'

My dear hearers, this is religion. This is, indeed, that life of God in the soul, which he will first prove and then own. He proves its reality, by bringing it to the test. He improves its power by exercise, and teaches all his children to prepare for it. 'Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial that is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you.' It is a part of a plan: it is a means to an end: it is a process that bespeaks present value and future advancement:—'Ye are now in heaviness through manifold temptations, that the trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, may be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ.'

This gold is tried by SATAN, who, as we learn from the cases of Job and Peter, is aiming to destroy what God means only to purify. Satan will seek to place such men as Hophni and Phineas at the altar, if it be but to distress and drive away from it such worshippers as Hannah.

The WORLD, is a fiery trial to a faithful heart: either vexing it, as it did Hannah's; or dividing it, as it did Elkana's.

The FLESH, called 'the old man with his affections and lusts,' is for a time permitted to try the reality of 'the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.' No fire is found by the believer more severe than this; leading him often to cry out, 'O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?'

The FAMILY is sometimes a fierce fire. Our family comprehends the greatest portion of our world: it is to us the most interesting, and therefore is capable of be-

coming the most trying, portion. The family is often our furnace: it has pains as necessarily secret as severe; and where they can be told, they are told in vain to any but God. Such was the family of Hannah.

But why do I stop at the family: we have just seen that the CHURCH itself is a fire, by which the faith and patience of its true members will be tried. It will try whether we, like Hannah, can honour the house and ordinances of God, while Hophni and Phineas are profaning it: whether we can acknowledge a true minister of God, and meekly bear with his infirmities, though, like *Eli*, he mistakes our case, and chills the heart which he should cherish: whether we can receive the promises of God from his mouth, though it sometimes speaks unadvisedly. The Church is a fire to try the Church.

Ignorance can see nothing but misery in such a process: and malice stands ready, like 'Penninah,' to insult and provoke the desolate. 'God hath forsaken her: persecute and take her, for there is none to deliver.'

But, 'understand, ye brutish among the people; and, ye fools, when will ye be wise?' Doth he not sit by his gold as a refiner, while ye stand by it misconceiving or mocking? Doth he not sit by it to watch over the furnace, to regulate the heat, to determine the time of trial, and to bring his gold out of it 'seven times purified?'

A proof of this is before your eyes in the text. This woman 'out of weakness was made strong.' She looked beyond her difficulties, and wrought through them: —'perplexed, but not in despair: persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed.' She teaches us, as I said, what religion is, and what is its value.

We have thus seen true religion to be a divine life, and we have seen it tried. Let us, in the next place, observe it owned and honoured of him who gave it; 'for, them that honour God, he will honour.'

The servants of God, like Hannah, may have to pass through many trying dispensations to those 'good things which God hath prepared for them that love him;' but, though 'weeping may endure for a night, joy' will certainly come 'in the morning.' The night was past: the precious seed of faith, prayer, and patience had been sown weeping: and now the Lord removes the error from Eli's mind, and puts comfortable words into his mouth. 'Eli said, Go in peace, and the God of Israel shall grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of him.'

The life of faith can take comfort from a word, and rest a world upon a promise. God, who sent her a token for good, enabled her to receive it, and to rest on it. 'And she said, Let thy handmaid find grace in thy sight. So the woman went her way, and did eat, and her countenance was no more sad.' Her affairs *without* the Sanctuary actually remained in the same state as before; but a transaction had passed *within* it, which placed them in a new point of view. The favourable aspect of God, gives a new aspect to every thing besides.

The time for God to honour the faith which he had tried, was now fully come. Hannah had left the temple, cheered and satisfied. 'And they rose early, and worshipped before the Lord, and returned and came to their house—and the Lord remembered Hannah—and she bare a son, and called his name Samuel, saying, Because I asked him of the Lord.'

The Lord not only honours the work which he has proved, but he often does so 'beyond all that we can

ask or think.' Hannah had asked for a *man-child;* but it was not in her contemplation to ask for a SAMUEL—that light of Israel—that Prophet mighty in word and deed before God—that blessing and pattern to the world in every age. She returns, in due time, with this child; and, in presenting him to *Eli* with a heart overflowing at the recollection of the place, time and circumstances of her trial, she says, "'O my Lord, as thy soul liveth, my Lord, I am the woman that stood by thee here praying unto the Lord. For this child I prayed, and the Lord hath given me my petition,' and to him I dedicate the gift for ever."

'They, that sow in tears, shall reap in joy;' and the testimony of such witnesses is the soul of history. Let us mark the state of her mind by its grateful acknowledgments.

She brought the child to *Eli*, and said, 'O my Lord, I am the woman that stood by thee here praying.' "You recollect," as if she had said, "a poor broken-hearted creature—drunk, indeed, with grief, though not with wine. You saw me here reduced to the one help and hope of the comfortless. I am the woman whom you sent away with a word of encouragement, and here is the answer to my prayer: for this child I prayed; and I am come this day to give him up to that God, who is 'all my salvation and all my desire.' For, thankful as I am for the child, yet 'my heart rejoiceth in the Lord: there is none holy as the Lord; neither is there any Rock like our God.' I have been cruelly scorned and reproached, but 'talk no more so exceeding proudly: let not arrogancy come out of your mouth: for the Lord is a God of knowledge, by Him actions are weighed:' I stand a living witness to this truth. 'The Lord killeth, and maketh alive: He maketh poor and maketh rich: He bringeth low and lifteth up.' Surely

I am a witness for God, that 'He will keep the feet of his saints:' for, 'as for me my feet were almost gone, my steps had well nigh slipt:' but he led me with his hand, and quieted me in himself. The wicked may proudly boast, and the righteous for a time seem forsaken; but God 'abideth faithful; he cannot deny himself.' Yet a 'little while, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness, for by strength shall no man prevail.' No: 'the adversaries of the Lord shall be broken in pieces: out of heaven shall he thunder upon them. The Lord shall judge the ends of the earth.' He shall give 'strength unto his King, and exalt the horn of his anointed'" (or Christ.)

Thus have we seen, my dear hearers, a divine life in the soul tried and honoured.

But am I to presume that all before me this day are, like Hannah, 'alive unto God through Jesus Christ,' and maintaining a communion with him in their sorrows and in their joys? Are not many of you, on the contrary, 'living without God in the world?' Let conscience speak; and let it be heard when it speaks. Does not conscience declare that you live like men in general, without repentance? without faith in Christ? without that heart-felt religion and that secret prayer, which mark the character of those who are 'alive to God?' Compare the sorrows and the joys of this woman with your own. How do you need reproaches? How do you answer, when unjustly accused? Whither do you go in trouble? Is it to your Bible? Is it to your Saviour? or is it to some broken cistern of human power or carnal pleasure? Examine, I pray you: who are your chosen companions? what are your oracles? where are your expedients? Are they like those of this woman? Are they not the very reverse?

You may regularly attend the public worship of God:

you may contend warmly for revealed truth: you may protest against the conduct of the ignorant and profane, and may appear religious at certain seasons. Thus, perhaps, *Penninah*, the adversary of *Hannah*, appeared. But beware of putting the mere picture of religion for the substance. If your friend is dead, you find it but a small comfort that you retain his picture. How wretched do you esteem the emigrant, who wanders over Europe with an assumed title, a star, or a plan of an estate; but who possesses neither rank nor property!

'Examine,' therefore, 'yourselves, whether ye be in the faith: prove your ownselves: know ye not your ownselves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?'

God is witness, and your own souls are witnesses, that you, whom I am now particularly addressing, 'have not the life of God within you.'

Brethren, his word declares, that to be 'carnally minded is death:' that 'the carnal mind is enmity against God:' that 'they that are in the flesh cannot please God:' and that 'if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.' And if none of his, whose are they?

Trouble is that dreay path, which every one, soon or late, must tread: but, to enter into it without a guide, to faint in it without a comforter, to meet death at the end without a prospect:—If any man, however gay or great, is reduced to this, 'I say that an untimely birth is better than he.'

What then must be the consequence of dying in such a state? What language must, at length, proceed from such lips? Will not one say, "I am the man, who once stood praying before the Lord; but the world kept possession of my heart: I talked of religion; but

had none. I see, too late, that religion is a divine life, which I once despised, and have now lost for ever!"

Will not another reply, "I am the woman, who stood, not praying, but trifling before the Lord. I heard, indeed, the truth: I felt some convictions; but I lost them among the giddy. I recollected them in death; and now meet them in eternity, as 'the worm that dieth not?' "

May the Holy Spirit awaken you from such a fatal delirium, before it be too late. It is not too late, as yet. The ordinances of this day are the call of Christ to your hearts. He ceaseth not to complain, 'Ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life.'—'Turn ye, for why will ye die?' Lift your hearts to him in reply, "'Lord, to whom shall we go, but unto thee?' Give us the life which thou requirest; and which, when tried, thou wilt bring forth as gold."

I turn to you, who need not to be informed that true religion is a divine life. You feel it to be something very distinct from the flighty speculations of some men, or the graver forms of others. You know what it is to take your cares, like *Hannah*, to one who careth for you. You have felt a sympathy with her, as we have passed on: for there is something common in the exercises and experience of every living branch in the True Vine.

I more particularly address those Younger Christians, who tell me that they faint in endeavouring to combat sensible evils with spiritual reflections:—that to bear up against and work through their difficulties merely by faith in a promise, is the greatest difficulty of all: and readily do we grant, that believing, which some think so very easy, is found by the real believer to be his hardest work.

But, first, CONSIDER THE NATURE OF YOUR PRESENT DISPENSATION.

'We walk by faith, and not by sight.' Observe 'the footsteps of the flock.' How did Abraham, Jacob, Moses, David, Hannah, and the rest of 'that cloud of witnesses' mentioned in Hebrews xi. make their way? Was it by faith, or sight? They advanced only on the ground of divine assurances; 'and they were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims upon earth.'

Do not, therefore, allow yourself even to wish for the by-path, which needs no faith, and presents no trials. Let it be enough for us, that we are passing through a dispensation to glory, through which our Master himself once passed, and through which all his Disciples follow him. It is experiment: it is exercise: it is education: which, though at the time not 'joyous but grievous, yet worketh the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby.'

When we object to his methods of advancement, we resemble our children, who would be learned, but would not go to school; or, when they go, would endure nothing there. We know how to answer *them:* let us learn thus to answer *ourselves.*

"Teach me," said a king once to a mathematician, "that art of yours which I so much admire. I would fain be a geometrician, but cannot think of passing through the ordinary paths of the science."—"Your majesty must be told," replied he, "that *there is no* ROYAL *way* to geometry." Apply this to religion, and you will find but one consecrated, beaten track to glory, in which the scholar knows by BELIEVING, ascends by *humiliation*, and conquers by *suffering*.

Let me next remind you, to STUDY THE TEMPER OF YOUR MASTRR.

If you would not stumble in his path, 'let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.' As his death is the only atonement for our sins, and his Spirit the only life of our souls; so his lowly mind, his meek and suffering spirit, is alone adapted to the heavenward path. Hear his words:—'If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow me.—Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me: for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.' "Learn of me," as if he had said, "who when I 'was reviled, reviled not again: when I suffered, I threatened not, but committed' myself 'to him that judgeth righteously.'"

Our enemies oppress and vex us; but, well would it be, if, while we took up the burthen, we could, like *Hannah*, leave them to bear all the *guilt*. Let others try to lower standards and alter measures in Christianity, in order to cover their defects: let us keep the great pattern ever in sight, however we may come short of it. *Hannah* is an instructive way-mark to believing women, under family trials. The woman, who can thus meet injuries and reproaches, while 'she trusts in God at all times, and pours out her heart before him,' has already obtained the victory over her worst enemy—SELF; and, like Hannah, shall soon see the rest 'silent in darkness, for by strength shall no man prevail.'

Lastly, EXPECT GREAT THINGS, BUT EXPECT THEM IN PROGRESS.

'There is a time,' says the wise man, 'to every purpose under heaven.—Light is sown for the righteous,' but appears not till its season. Think it not strange that the God of Order has appointed his best blessings to descend, when we are best prepared to receive them. In what a trying process did the faithful Hannah meet

them! and, let me ask, are we so purified by our fire that *we* should expect them immediately?

We wait a little, and think it long. We limit 'the Holy One of Israel,' in the prosecution of an eternal purpose; and say, 'Let him hasten his work that we may see it:' forgetting that we are here but ephemera, insects of a day; while, with him, 'a thousand years are but as one day.'

'But, blessed are all they who wait for him:' who, like Hannah, follow him in the progress, and depend upon him for the issue. 'Who is among you, that walketh in darkness,' yet thus 'stayeth upon his God?' He will shortly enable you also to add, "O my Lord, I am the man who have passed through many a dark night and thorny path; a solitary weeping pilgrim. I am that woman who stood here praying: nature fainted, but underneath me were his everlasting arms: light was sowing for me while I sat in darkness, and arose in progress beyond my expectation.—I also am a witness, 'that the Lord is gracious, his mercy is everlasting, and his truth endureth from generation to generation.'"

THE END.

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